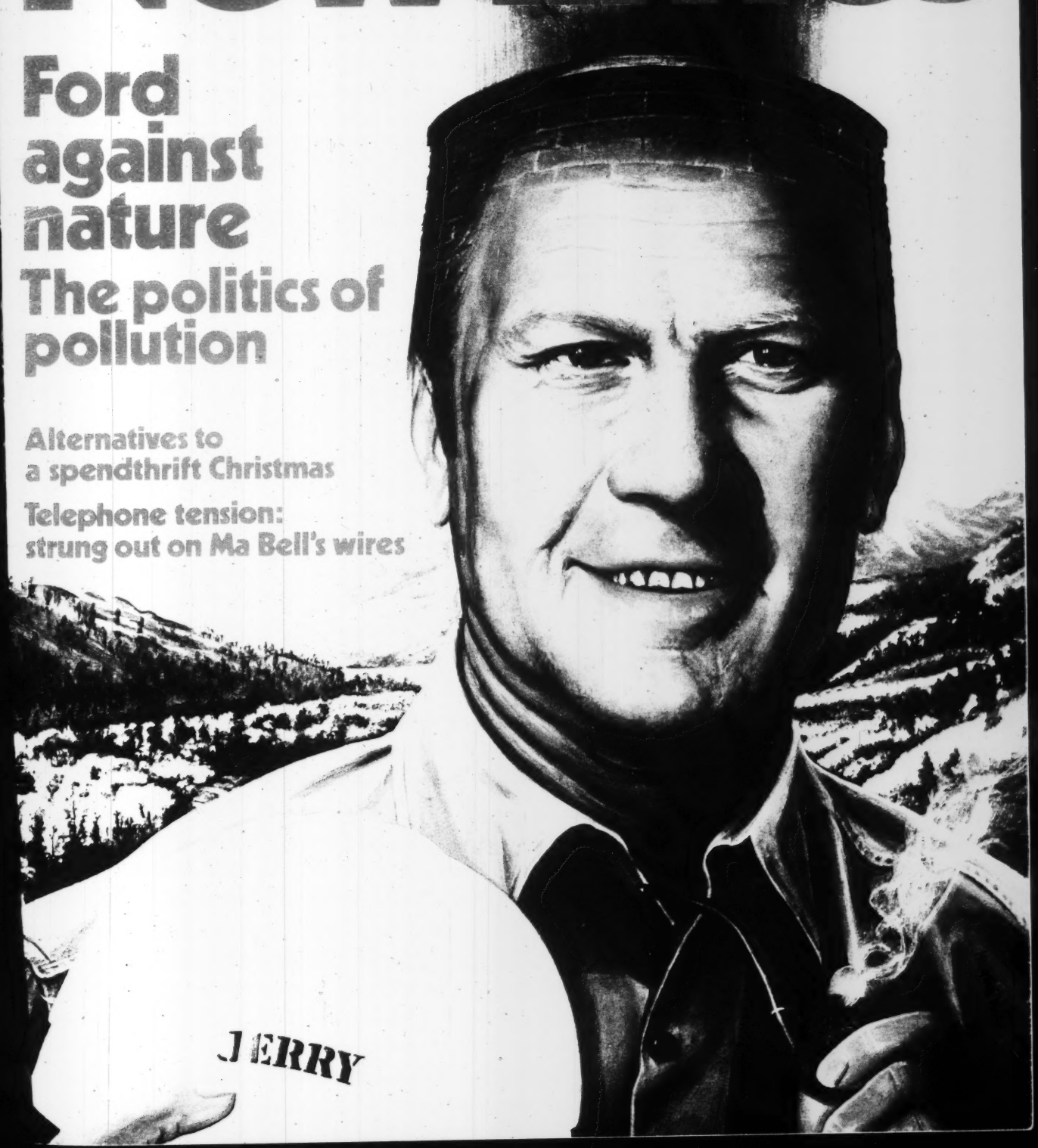
New Times

Ford against nature

The politics of pollution

Alternatives to a spendthrift Christmas

Telephone tension: strung out on Ma Bell's wires



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PINTO WAGON	14.9 ft.	850 lbs.	57.2	4

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NewTimes

TOP OF THE NEWS

Gerald Ford and the politics of pollution

Now that the spotlight has shifted from the rape of nature to the energy shortage, the President and his industrialist cronies are unraveling the accomplishments of the environmental movement.

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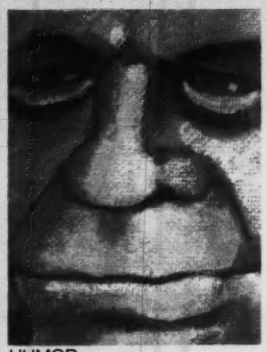

HUMOR

Presidential speechwriting in thirteen easy lessons

As old Ben Jonson put it, to speak and to speak well are two things.

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Fear of phoning

The telephone is no longer an instrument of convenience—it's an inescapable, insistent annoyance.

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Prime time postmortem

The demise of *Fay*—lively new sitcom canceled after just three episodes—exposed the extent of network faint-heartedness.

By Richard Levine

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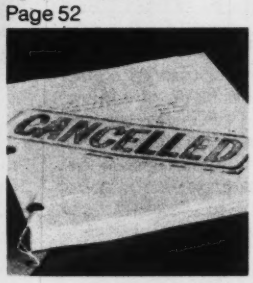

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Final Tribute

Joe Willie at a sorry pass.

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Letters

Time marches on

I have just finished reading "Bringing the war home," November 28. I thought you might be interested in two quotes from an article that ran in *Time* magazine August 22, 1938. "Surprising to most U.S. citizens would be the contents of the General Staff 'White Paper'—a thorough plan for suppressing civil disorder in the U.S. In it every large city is divided into possible battle zones. Paved highway intersections throughout the U.S. are marked down for airplane runways." ". . . the army's present guesses rate future wars in the following order of likelihood: 1) civil uprisings on the U.S. mainland—some sort of trouble in the social order; 2) war in South America. . .; 3) war in Europe or Asia. . . ."

History repeats itself.

James R. Schatz
Rochester, New York

Huey in Cuba

With interest I read in your November 28 Insider a quippish piece regarding Huey P. Newton. For the record, Comrade Huey P. Newton was never the chairman of the Black Panther Party but *is* and has been the founder, leader and Chief Theoretician of our Party.

After I got over being humored by the fantasy of Huey's life in exile, I realized the treachery of the article lay in one simple idea: "More important, after doing some checking in California radical circles [an interesting euphemism], they [the Cubans] concluded that Newton might well be guilty of the crimes with which he had been charged." Beside not being courteous enough to imagine, as even good Americans allegedly to the political right of your magazine still believe, that a person is innocent until proven guilty, you came right out and provided ammunition to the FBI's and others' stories to discredit Huey P. Newton (and by obvious implication, the Black Panther Party) in the legitimate struggle of black and poor and working people in this country for total liberation and freedom from oppression.

We have taken note of you. In our philosophy the people will win, regain control of our lives and the economic, political and social institutions that affect them. It is inevitable. With our winning will come the demise of all forms of reaction, and reactionaries of all kinds will have no place, no cloak and no rock to hide them. The sooner, the better.

Elaine Brown
Chairperson, Black Panther Party
Oakland, California

Hard times

I was pleased to find others as appalled as I am at the way we are being sold our own country's 200th birthday ("The Great American Bicentennial Sale," November 28). I was also pleased at the ideas of Jeremy Rifkin on economic democracy ("Reclaiming the revolution," November 28).

One thing bothers me: Would the Hart poll results have been as good if it had been taken in a period of economic boom? Does the push for change indicated in the poll show permanent disillusionment with our present system, or is it just a backlash from the hard times we've seen lately?

Chuck Ruetz
Austin, Texas

The *Post* strike

Philip Nobile's cover article on the *Washington Post* strike ("High noon at the Washington Post," November 14) reports that "Davis [Marty Davis, *Post* management] gleefully remarks that Jim Dugan [pressmen's local president] owns three trotting horses and races them at Bowie." If Nobile had taken the time to check such gleeful gossip, he would have found out that Dugan has five kids but no horses. He might also have found out that Bowie is not a trotting course, only a flat racing track.

Marty Davis calls the pressmen's local a racist union.Does Nobile call Jim Dugan and ask the pressmen's side of the story? Of course not. He might have learned the *Post*'s figures are inaccurate. Five of the 13 apprentices are black. He says there are none. In at least two recent cases, blacks earned their journeymen's cards at the *Post*. In the case of Erwin Davis, the *Post* refused to employ him as a fulltime journeyman, so he was put on the substitute list. Lloyd Simmons actually worked as a journeyman at the *Post* until he lost his hand in a press the *Post* had failed to equip with adequate safety devices.

Michael T. Dresser
Washington, D.C.

Philip Nobile replies:

The pressmen I spoke to about the ethnic makeup of their union hemmed and hawed. Understandably so, since their union is de facto racist. If I missed five black apprentices, by relying on management figures, it is still a fact that the 180 journeymen of the pressmen's union presently employed by the *Washington Post* are all white!

In the gallop toward deadline, I did not check the matter of the horses. Mr. Davis' testimony seemed too vivid and too specific to suspect. I apologize for conveying this slur on Mr. Dugan.

Pornography of power

The first two columns in your November 28 issue blurred for me: "Do snuff films exist?" (Slow Down) and "Too much freedom" (The Ruling Class). Sam Huntington might well regard snuff films as an example of too much freedom. I found myself wondering with creeping horror, Does Sam Huntington exist?

Of the two evils described—films in which actual, deliberate slaughter of human beings is documented for pornographic purposes, and a council of the powerful addressed to the "excesses" of democracy—there is no question that, bad as both are, the latter is far more pernicious.

Judson Jerome
Hancock, Maryland

The gag rule dilemma

Fulminations

By Larry L. King

Those of us who report bring you more bad news than good, and so in keeping with traditions established by sensitive emperors we expect—at least figuratively—to periodically forfeit our heads as the bearers of ill tidings. Politicians bait us from the stump to the automatic cheers of the crowd; in private they revile us even more than they do those bastards of the opposition party. President Nixon placed a high percentage of newsmen on his enemies list and avoided the White House press corps as if its members might be lepers.

Well, hell, we didn't enter journalism to make friends. Sometimes we are excessively self-righteous in our dispensations. Maybe we drink a shade much or sponsor a cynic's gleam, and I couldn't much blame you for not wanting your daughter to marry one. It is quite another thing, however, for official agents to attempt to cripple us in our jobs. To do so spits in the face of the Constitution, a far more serious offense than ragging a few cranky newsmen. There is a thing called the First Amendment. It basically guarantees that we purveyors of the news shall be free to call 'em as we see 'em. Increasingly, however, the politicians and the lawyers and the judges—all birds of a feather—attempt to do serious violence to the people's right to know.

Within the past decade we've moved closer and closer to press censorship and toward the British system of employing the contempt powers of the courts to reduce press coverage of criminal trials to a bare minimum. Judges have made wider uses of omnibus "gag orders," not only forbidding trial participants, court officers or police from talking about given cases but also including newsmen in their sweeping orders. Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun (who predicted, wrongly, that publication of the Pentagon Papers would invite "the death of soldiers, and destruction of alliances, the greatly increased difficulty of negotiations with our enemies . . .") recently upheld a Nebraska murder trial gag order in ruling that the courts may forbid the press to report on confessions, a defendant's prior criminal record and ill-defined certain other statements "if the courts consider such orders necessary for a fair trial." Aye, there's the rub. By Blackmun's edict any judge, at any time, in any case, may at his sole discretion censor a supposedly free press in the name of a perfect justice—and, so loosely worded was Justice Blackmun's ruling, effectively shut off all information including public documents.

Justice Harry Blackmun at his swearing-in: Muzzling the messenger.

Some honest conflicts exist, yes, between First Amendment guarantees of an unfettered press and Sixth Amendment guarantees to individuals on trial with their freedoms, reputations or even their lives at stake. I have been troubled by inflammatory pre-trial publicity in the noted cases of Brunc Hauptmann, the Rosenbergs, Dr. Sam Sheppard and a former boxer named Rubin (Hurricane) Carter. Maybe they *did* kidnap the Lindbergh baby or slip atomic secrets to Russia or kill a wife or murder people in a holdup, but our reportage largely convicted them before their trials. But the press—generally—has become much more sensitive to individual rights (thanks, I think, to the Warren Court) in recent years.

The danger in imposing what is advertised as "limited" censorship on the press in select cases is that it won't stop there. If our courts today presume that a little censorship is permissible, then one day soon they will presume a little more and then some more still. The Constitution doesn't say they can do that *to any degree at all.*

Suppose such gag rules had been invoked in the Watergate case. Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward wouldn't be famous, but, more importantly, we might never have learned the vital—if ugly—truths we have learned. Gag rules on reporters would protect every conniving or crooked politician among us, as well as ambitious or vengeful prosecutors. Simply put, if reporters are gagged, we run the risk of star-chamber proceedings.

Lawyers I know—among them good and honorable men—do not agree. They rail against prejudicial pre-trial publicity, the sensationalism of the press and so on. Sometimes they are right. Sometimes, too, they themselves are contributing factors—using, or attempting to use, the press to manipulate public opinion. Both defense attorneys and prosecutors, most often when their case is in tatters, are guilty. Let a case come along in which they feel that no news is good news, however, and they will with much piety speak to the principle of invoking censorship in the name of a pluperfect justice. Depends on whose ox is being gored.

Alarmed by what this creeping censorship portends—once a Supreme Court justice puts the stamp of approval on gag rules—organizations of professional newsmen asked the full Supreme Court to rule on the matter. The high court had not ruled as of this writing. What it ultimately decides will determine whether the Constitution means as much as formerly, and whether your government properly cherishes your right to know. ●

Who's crazy?

Slow Down

By James S. Kunen

The movie *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*—in which Nurse Ratched drives her patients crazy in the name of therapy and the only time any helping goes on is when the inmates are running the asylum—started me wondering: Who's crazy? So I went to ask my friend Howie the Harp, who ought to know.

Howie the Harp (as he calls himself) was an active member of a Queens gang called the Psychotic Lords until he was 13, when he got into a knife fight and was dragged off to Creedmoor State Hospital, where he was diagnosed as a manic-depressive psychotic and locked up for a year and a half. He spent another year and a half at a residential treatment center for mentally disturbed adolescents before his parents, who had themselves been mental patients, helped him escape. He went to the West Coast and got involved in the now-defunct Insane Liberation Front, then came back to New York and started Project Release, one of dozens of organizations of former inpatients working nationwide to improve the lot of mental patients in and out of hospitals.

Howie, a very large young man with unkempt shoulder-length hair, filled up most of his tiny $25-a-week hotel room. I squeezed into a corner and posed my question.

"What is called 'mental illness' is primarily a reaction to an unjust and oppressive society," Howie answered. He doesn't think anybody's "sick." "If you can't 'adjust' to being a memorizing machine at school, or you can't 'adjust' to knocking yourself out doing robot work to make someone else rich, you're a quasi-criminal, a threat to society, and you're institutionalized so psychiatrists can 'adjust' you and send you back out to work and produce. Prisons and mental hospitals serve the same purpose—to 'adjust' those who rebel." According to Howie, it's the social and economic conditions that make their lives intolerable.

But Howie's crazy. Certified crazy—by professionals, experts in the field of lunacy, who should know a "sick" person from a "well" one, since they're the ones who imposed that medical analogy on people's behavior in the first place.

Should know, but don't, according to an article Howie steered me to. "Psychiatric Judgments," by Bruce Ennis and Thomas Litwack, in the May 1974 *California Law Review*, surveys the literature on the diagnostic competence of shrinks.

It turns out shrinks aren't especially good at their own game. In one study psychologists could distinguish between the drawings of deteriorated schizophrenics and those of normal subjects 56.7 percent of the time, while college students could do so 56.2 percent of the time. Another study found that experienced psychologists using the Bender-Gestalt Test could distinguish brain-damaged patients 60-70 percent of the time, compared with 57-73 percent for hospital secretaries.

What a shrink sees when he diagnoses you depends to a large extent on what he expects to see. In one study an actor portrayed a healthy man while talking about himself in a diagnostic interview with a clinician. The interview was recorded and played to two groups of psychiatrists, who were asked to diagnose the man. The first group was given no preliminary information, and none of the shrinks diagnosed him as psychotic. But before the tape was played to the second group of psychiatrists, they were told by a "prestige figure" that the man "looked neurotic but actually is quite psychotic." Sixty percent of that group diagnosed psychosis.

Once a person is labeled, he stays labeled. Eight experimental subjects feigning one symptom of schizophrenia were admitted to mental hospitals as "schizophrenics." Immediately after admission they stopped displaying the symptom and acted normally, but their behavior was consistently perceived as abnormal. For example, several of the subjects took notes on their experiences; the note-taking was described in their hospital records as "an aspect of [their] pathological behavior."

After an exhaustive review of research literature, one author concluded that most diagnoses don't even correspond to the symptoms perceived by the psychiatrist, let alone

those that are actually exhibited by the patient. Specific diagnoses such as "paranoid schizophrenia" or "hysterical neurosis" are applied even when the examiner has not recorded any of the symptoms associated with those labels.

A patient who disagrees with his diagnostician had best keep his opinion to himself. Voicing criticism of the mental health profession tends to increase a patient's psychopathology in the eyes of mental health professionals. A patient who expresses dissatisfaction with hospitalization is likely to be perceived as in need of more hospitalization.

On any given day in this country, about 350,000 people are inpatients in mental hospitals of all sorts. In the course of a year, 1.3 million different individuals spend some time as psychiatric inpatients. About 40 percent of them are put in the hospitals against their will because physicians have decided they are dangerous to themselves or others, although there is no empirical support for the belief that psychiatrists can predict dangerous behavior, and there is no support for the notion that the "mentally ill" are more dangerous, as a group, than the general population. While the patients do their time in the mental hospitals, little is done to alleviate their suffering. Sixty percent are readmitted within a year of their release.

"Psychiatric care is geared to keep mental patients mental patients," Howie says. "It creates a dependency pattern. You *believe* you're a mental patient; you think of the shrinks as gods and you get dependent on them."

The dozen active members of Project Release depend only on one another, permitting no psychologists or social workers near their weekly meetings. And in the 11-month history of the group, not a single one of them has had to go back to the hospital.

As the national economy gets worse, psychiatric admissions increase. Mental health is a growth industry. It costs New York State alone almost $1 billion annually to run its Department of Mental Hygiene. We spend $40 per patient per day to keep mental patients locked up in bastions of misery, only to send them back to the same conditions of helplessness and isolation that caused their problems. The success of groups like Howie's makes that seem a little crazy. ●

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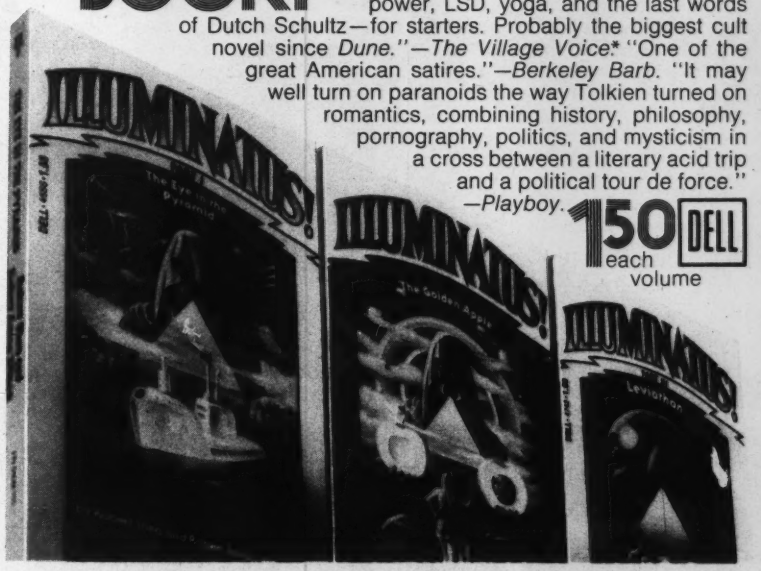

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NEW TIMES introduced its readers to two of the most promising new ways to expand your consciousness and your personal effectiveness, Silva Mind Control and Erhard Seminars Training (est). NEW TIMES told how you can escape from your shrink. (You'd be surprised how many people want to but don't know how.) NEW TIMES even did its own medical research on marijuana and concluded that pot has some advantages most people don't know about. And NEW TIMES told how single grandparents have been living together by the thousands to beat inflation.

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So mail the attached card today. That way, your friends will get their first blast in time for Christmas.

NewTimes

A DYNAMITE GIFT

Why it's fashionable to hate the U.N.

The Ruling Class

By Robert Scheer

It used to be that only right-wing cranks attacked the United Nations. (Remember those highway billboards—"Get the U.S. out of the U.N. and the U.N. out of the U.S."?) Establishment thought was totally supportive of the world organization in the old days when the U.N. was a convenient rubber stamp for U.S. cold war policy. This country rallied around the U.N. when it endorsed our side in the Korean War, and when it covered for the West in the Belgian Congo while the CIA set up the murder of Patrice Lumumba. But U.S. power has eroded in the world and, therefore, also in the U.N., while at the same time dozens of Third World nations have been admitted to membership. Like a parent with a child who has suddenly grown up, America doesn't have quite as much love and affection for the thing now that it can't be controlled.

The U.N. is now responding to the anger, desperation and hopes of those who have been living on the short end of history these past 25 years. The rhetoric is tough because it comes from people who have until recently possessed miniscule power to shape events. And because these new forces within the U.N. have endorsed positions unpopular in this country, it has become terribly fashionable to deride not only recent U.N. resolutions but also the very process that is the U.N. Some of our more sophisticated commentators—those who long supported the U.N. as the best hope for world peace— now abruptly abandon it.

Unfortunately, this hysteria was fueled a bit by the Final Tribute in the last issue of this journal, in which Mark Goodman endorsed the view of William Buckley that the U.N. has become a zoo and then added that it is a palace ruled by a "bunch of thugs." If one is interested in denying any connection between Zionism and racism, as Goodman obviously is, then it hardly makes sense to join up with Buckley, who has long believed that Rhodesia, with its 300,000 whites ruling 3,000,000 blacks, is a just and progressive society. While it has come to be the norm in American mass media to avoid any criticism of Zionism, one would have expected Goodman to at least take up the substance of questions posed by the U.N. resolutions rather than simply deny the humanity of the delegates who voted for them.

The only way to seriously answer the charge that Zionism is inherently racist is to demonstrate the mutual compatibility of Jewish and Palestinian homelands in the Mideast. The bias of the American press lies in its preoccupation with Jewish national aspirations and its indifference to those of the Palestinians. Palestinian nationalism is dismissed as the mere fabrication of Arab anti-Semitism. This view holds that Palestinian nationalism is inherently racist but that Zionism is inherently non-racist—and thus commits the same error toward the Palestinians that the U.N. resolution does toward Zionists.

There are real questions about the treatment of Jews within the Arab countries, just as there are about the treatment of Arabs within Israel. But the gut problem of the Mideast reduces to a simple one: Unless both Jews and Palestinians feel that they have a safe homeland, there will be wars.

The American media downplayed two tougher, more significant U.N. resolutions that insist the Palestinians and their representatives in the P.L.O. be included in any negotiations of a Mideast settlement. And can one really imagine a durable peace that does not have their support? The bulk of available evidence indicates that the P.L.O. is the most representative organization of Palestinians and that the sooner the Israelis negotiate with them the better. To assume that the delegates at the U.N. who voted for that position did so because of what Goodman calls the "peanuts of oil" seriously underestimates the general moral support that has developed for the Palestinians quite apart from pressure politics. I fail to see how it is a service to the Jewish people to continually obscure this reality. Palestinian national aspirations are no more likely to disappear than are Jewish ones. While it is all too true that the aspirations of the Palestinians have been viciously manipulated by corrupt and extremely repressive Arab regimes, one cannot deny the reality of Palestinian nationalism. And it is simply nonsense to suggest that the U.N. is now controlled by Arab oil money, for however much that may add up to, it still doesn't come close to touching the economic power of the U.S., Western Europe, Japan and the Soviet Union.

But in any case, why write off the U.N. simply because there is now some new countervailing power? Those who now judge the U.N. as "unrepresentative" conveniently ignore the fact that one-quarter of the human race was excluded from representation in that body for over 25 years because the U.S. government denied the existence of the People's Republic of China. Whether one agrees with all of its resolutions or not, it should be obvious that the U.N. has never been more vibrant and representative than it is now. It is just that the U.N. is no longer simply the playground of American foreign policymakers—a fact that enrages many of our politicians and writers.

This posture of rejecting the U.N. misses the best opportunity that the world organization has ever presented for seriously debating the important issues that confront us. The issues will persist whether the U.N. forum continues to exist or not, but if the forum collapses then the debate will be just that much more irrational and poorly informed. It is for this reason that it would have been much more to the point for opponents of the Zionism resolution to seriously argue against its content rather than attempting to short-circuit the debate with calls for wrecking the U.N. ●

Can Woodward and Bernstein do it again?
How kids view the elderly

EDITED BY TONY SCHWARTZ

The Insider

Politics

Victory spoils

Perhaps John Durkin would have been better off to quit before he got ahead. When the New Hampshire Democrat ran for the Senate against Republican Louis Wyman in 1974, the race ended in an inconclusive tie. A year-long battle for the seat ensued and, in something of an anticlimax, the 38-year-old Durkin finally won a September special election runoff.

Now, less than three months after taking office, Durkin has run into new problems. On December 3 the former New Hampshire insurance commissioner called in his 25-year-old special assistant, Marshall Strauss, and fired him. Later that day, Durkin fired Phil Clapp, a 22-year-old legislative aide. According to Clapp, the senator told

LEE LOCKWOOD/BLACK STAR

Durkin: up and out

him, "I'm letting you go and you've got 25 minutes to get the hell out of the office." The following day, 33-year-old administrative assistant Joe Grandmaison, who ran Durkin's special election, handed in his resignation. It was followed in turn, by the resignation of Cary Caton, a 30-year-old legislative assistant. On Friday executive assistant Pat Chambers walked out, and the body count stood at five.

We were unable to reach Durkin for comment, but press aide Chuck Meara did give us the senator's version of the tumult. Strauss and Clapp were both fired, explained Meara, because Durkin was "not satisfied" with their work, while Joe Grandmaison left to explore "other options." Cary Caton left because she is a good friend of Grandmaison's, and Pat Chambers because she is a good friend of Caton's.

Frankly, the explanation sounded a little strange to us. What about the allegation, made by three of the departed staffers we were able to reach, that Durkin is an extremely difficult person to work for? "Well," said survivor Meara, "most people are difficult to work for."

Supreme confidence

A footnote to the rapid ascent of John Paul Stevens, President Ford's new nominee for the Supreme Court: Back in 1969, when Stevens was 49 years old, he was approached by Senator Charles Percy (R-Ill.). "I offered to help him get on the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago," Percy explained to a friend of ours. "He said he wasn't ready and told me to come back in four or five years." Percy appreciated his friend's integrity but nonetheless impressed upon him the value of living in the present. "I might not be able to get it for you in four or five years. Besides, in that time the Supreme Court might open up." Stevens, who was then an antitrust lawyer in Chicago, finally decided to accept Percy's nomination, and the rest, as they say, is history.

The candidate

His film experience has apparently taught him a realpolitik lesson or two. In 1974 actor Robert Redford campaigned hard for Colorado gubernatorial candidate Richard Lamm, on the premise that Lamm was the "strongest candidate in the U.S." on environmental issues. Redford himself has taken strong pro-environment stances against nuclear power plant construction and uncontrolled strip mining and in favor of solar energy research. Lamm won

STEVE SHAPIRO/TRANSWORLD

Redford: slamming Lamm

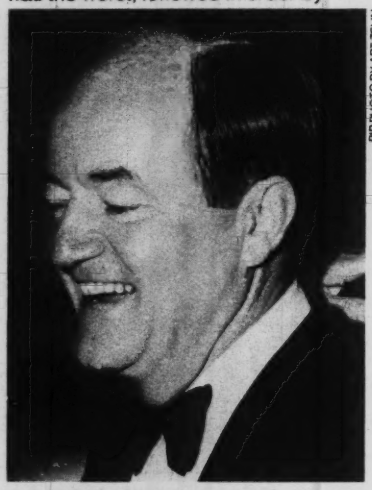
his race, and now Redford believes he was duped. The actor is particularly angry at the governor's willingness to allow the construction in Colorado of a major facility to process nuclear reactor fuel.

"You know we made a film about him—it's called *The Candidate*," Redford told Denver reporters recently. "Lamm has become the embodiment of the character of that film, about how a politician becomes so completely compromised once he gets into office." Lamm issued a detailed response, calling Redford "misinformed." That leaves the issue unresolved, but there's at least one obvious solution: The man who played the Candidate could now become the candidate.

Campaign notes

Hubert Humphrey emerges as the favorite choice for president among members of organized labor who answered a recent poll conducted by the California State Council of Service Employees. *Service Union Reporter*, the group's publication,

mailed a questionnaire to 177,000 union members throughout the U.S. Humphrey's weighted score was 2,079, followed by Henry Jackson (1,581), Edward Kennedy (636), Jerry Brown (571), Eugene McCarthy (562), Birch Bayh (557) and Frank Church and Morris Udall (536). Kennedy's showing was surprising in light of the fact that he was not listed on the ballot. Tabulations were made by giving three points for a first choice, two for a second, one for a third and minus three for each "no way I would support" ballot. All Republicans got negative totals. President Ford, at minus 2,690, was the worst, followed in order by



PIP PHOTO BY ART ZELIN

Humphrey: Vietnam tales

Nelson Rockefeller, Barry Goldwater and Edward Brooke. More surprising, though, were the negative totals among Democrats. George Wallace eked into the positive column with a 51 count, but Jimmy Carter, Terry Sanford, Milton Shapp and even Kennedy brother-in-law Sargent Shriver received negative totals.

—While Humphrey himself continues to maintain a non-candidate stance, his supporters are alive and busy. According to one person who has been contacted, Humphrey operatives are lobbying members of the "liberal left," including union officials who were early opponents of the Vietnam war. One part of the pitch goes that Humphrey was all set to give an antiwar acceptance speech at the convention in 1968 but was talked out of it by his then-campaign co-chairman, Fred Harris. The former Oklahoma senator is now an announced candidate himself, and out on the hustings he tells a very different story. Harris openly takes credit not only for turning Humphrey's campaign around on the war but also for being the dominant antiwar influence among Humphrey's top aides in 1968.

—Is a presidential campaign so intoxicating that the seeker becomes oblivious to anything but the business at hand? Take the case of Indiana Senator Birch Bayh. Bayh was taping a radio interview recently in the small town of Franklin, New Hampshire. During the interview, an ammonia tank behind the studio ruptured, and although the building quickly filled up with fumes, Bayh calmly continued talking. He remained unflustered even as fire and rescue units evacuated the adjacent restaurant and transported several victims of the explosion to a nearby hospital.

Blacks in an off-year

For a number of years, the Joint Center for Political Studies has been reporting the steady progress made by blacks seeking political office. Now that the dust has settled on what appears to have been a generally uneventful off-election year, the Center reports that a disturbing reversal occurred. According to Center president Eddie Williams, the showing by black candidates this fall was "disastrous." Black mayors dwindled from 143 to 130. Black challengers contested white incumbents in ten mayoral elections and lost every one. "There were some minor gains in various state legislatures (particularly Mississippi)," explained Williams, "but these limited successes in no way balanced the losses sustained in municipal elections."

In your heart, you know he's not right

The Senate as a radical institution? That's not exactly the prevailing public image, but sure enough it was the conclusion of a new study done by the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress. The right-wing group, which is bankrolled by Colorado beer magnate Joseph Coors, reported recently that half of the 100 U.S. senators "belong in the radical classification."

The study was based on the "first 100 significant votes" in the 1975 Senate and rated the legislators on the consistency of their conservative votes. Remarkably, 50 senators rated as "radical"; 9 as "very liberal"; and 14 as "moderate liberals." A conservative rating was not easy to come by. Witness: Only two senators—Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) and James McClure (R-Idaho)—received the ultimate committee approbation, "staunch conservative." Even Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.), the party's right-wing elder statesman, who received an Americans for Democratic Action rating of 0 in 1973 and 6 in 1974, was not quite right enough.

Making a racket

Spurred on by Jimmy Hoffa's apparent death, Senate Majority Whip Robert Griffin (R-Mich.) is attempting to form a select committee that would investigate union corruption, just as

DENNIS BRACK/BLACK STAR

Griffin: investigating the unions

Senator John McClellan's "rackets" committee did in the 1950s. "The investigation would deal with the question of Teamster pension fund investments and mob influence within the Teamsters," Griffin told our correspondent.

The AFL-CIO is reportedly opposed to such a committee, on the grounds that although the Teamsters would be the original target, the investigation would spread quickly to other unions. Griffin himself admits that's a possibility. Moreover, the AFL-CIO is concerned that Senate scrutiny would lead to additional restrictions on union activities. Griffin, after all, was largely responsible for the limits placed on unions following the McClellan investigation. Meanwhile, the Justice Department, which is conducting its own investigation of union corruption, is reportedly less than pleased about sharing the limelight with a Senate committee.

Media

Was the time right?

In recent months *Time* and *Newsweek* have come under increasing fire for running so many identical covers. At

first glance, the December 1 issues of the two magazines seemed to defy the pattern—*Newsweek* featured the Broadway play *A Chorus Line*, and *Time* highlighted the fashionable New York department store Bloomingdale's. But then some friends of ours got to thinking—both covers were quintessentially New York, and unusually parochial at that. Was the timing of the covers mere coincidence, or could there have been a conscious decision to celebrate New York City's virtues on the eve of its threatened default?

Newsweek Editor Edward Kosner denied that the cover was a partisan message. "I saw *Chorus Line* downtown at the Public Theater and then again on Broadway, and I think it is one of the great shows of our time. I thought it only appropriate that we call attention to it." Then again, Kosner wasn't ready to dismiss a second motivation entirely. "It's interesting thinking. It never entered into our discussions or decision, but of course one may have a subliminal desire to help our city."

Time Managing Editor Henry Grunwald was more explicit in denying any ulterior motive for his magazine's cover on Bloomingdale's. "It certainly may have looked that way, but it wasn't our intention. I was in on the planning and it was simply intended as a pre-Christmas shopping cover. If anything, the New York situation worried us. If the city should default, it would be somewhat questionable to come out with a cover on a New York department store." Well then, what about Kosner's subliminal motivation theory? "I never worry about my subconscious," Grunwald explained. "I've got too much to worry about consciously."

Woodstein: act two

After breaking one of the biggest political scandal stories in history, what do you do for an encore? Apparently Bob Woodward and Carl

WIDE WORLD

Woodstein: making waves

Bernstein, the two *Washington Post* reporters who uncovered Watergate, have found an answer. Five months before its publication, and under a careful cloak of secrecy, their new book about the end of the Nixon presidency is already creating unusual excitement. It has been chosen as a full selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club. More recently, *Newsweek* won the right to excerpt *The Final Days* in a three-way auction with *Esquire* and *Playboy*. David Obst, who represents the authors, says that although *Newsweek*'s bid—the first it has ever made for an excerpt—was not the highest, it was the most attractive. "*Newsweek* seemed to be the right medium for a document of such historic importance," explained Obst. According to knowledgeable sources, rights for the two 15,000-word excerpts went for more than $60,000. Publisher Simon & Schuster believes the revelations about Nixon's last days are so startling that it has made the extraordinary decision not to release any pre-publication galleys. Among the book's purported gems are details on Pat Nixon's drinking habits and a scene in which Nixon himself invites Henry Kissinger to pray with him on the floor of the Oval Office.

Baring his Soll

A newspaper's internal politics are rarely discussed in its own pages, but that was the sober undertaking of *Chicago Tribune* Editor Clayton Kirkpatrick recently. Writing in a column he shares with the paper's other editors—"Reporting the News"—Kirkpatrick began his December 7 piece starkly: "Rick Soll, a young and talented columnist whose work has won a following among *Tribune* readers over the last two years, no longer will be writing for this newspaper."

The 29-year-old Soll had been caught borrowing verbatim from an old column by Pete Hamill. Writing about the feelings of a mother and her son as he leaves home to join the army, Soll took some of the same language Hamill had once used to describe a similar scene. After evidence arose that another Soll piece on the adventure of a man in a boat off Bermuda had been fabricated, the young columnist decided to quietly leave the staff.

Clearly, the subsequent decision to go public with an extremely embarrassing story was influenced by post-Watergate standards. "Neither of the Soll columns was about matters of great significance," wrote Kirkpatrick, "[but] the standards that we look for in others, particularly public officials, cannot, in fairness, be denied application to us. We condemn deception in others; we cannot accept it among our own without penalty."

Seventies

Fortune-hunting

Some months ago, we ran a report on Robert Brown's *Soldier of Fortune* magazine for mercenaries and promptly received a deluge of mail requesting the publication's address. Now we've come across the real thing: a Fresno, California, Vietnam veteran who last month recruited American mercenaries to fight in the civil war in Angola—on the side of the anti-communist FNLA and UNITA factions.

David Bufkin began his

WIDE WORLD

Bufkin: recruiting mercenaries

campaign by placing a want ad in the *Fresno Bee*, and he claims to have received over 100 responses. He also told the *Bee* that recruiting had been done in New York and Chicago. "We're looking for men with military backgrounds and combat experience," he explained. "We're not looking for cooks or truck drivers." At last word, Bufkin claimed 20 recruits. He said he doubts many of them have political motivations. "I think some are doing it for the money, some for excitement; they're bored." They will be paid up to $1,200 a month and will be flown first to Portugal for a one-week combat refresher course, and then to Angola.

Bufkin is married, has three children and works as a crop duster in Fresno when he isn't doing mercenary work. "A mercenary is adventuresome," he explains. "It's what I'm geared to." Although he has refused to confirm the fact in subsequent interviews, Bufkin told the *Bee* that money for the operation has been put up by Angolan refugees and Portugese organizations—presumably those on the right-wing.

Young, and young at heart

Some time ago, we reported on the efforts of certain publishers to eliminate sexist and racist stereotypes from children's books. Now a study has revealed yet another, much less publicized stereotype: agism.

The University of Maryland Center on Aging recently examined 549 children's books in a local county library system. Only 16 percent of them portrayed older characters in any significant fashion beyond a single line of dialogue. Less than 4 percent of the books depicted older people as main characters in the story, while less than 5 percent of the books had pictures that included older characters. Perhaps most telling, the words "old," "little" and "ancient" accounted for 84 percent of all adjectives used to describe old people in the books studied.

"Children's books are perpetuating this ridiculous myth of the do-nothing, boring, invisible aged person," explains Dr. Edward Ansello, the study director. "Here's the first real learning experience about the aged, and kids don't learn about older people being interesting and important in their own right."

ILLUSTRATION BY RICHARD EGIELSKI

The Word

QP dolls

Beautiful People, in case you haven't been reading the *Women's Wear Daily* offshoot *W*, are now dead. In their place, according to the publication noted for its chronicling of the high society rich, are Quality People. A recent splashy section was devoted to 12 members of the new group, and it included this pithy introduction: "*W* calls these the Quality People, a term that suits our time rather than Beautiful People, which has become an anachronism. Quality has nothing to do with money, social position or dress. . . . It's what they accomplish and how they do it that makes them QP." Maybe so, but are we to assume it's a coincidence that the list includes the daughter of film director Howard Hawks, the wife of Henry Kissinger and a Rothschild to boot?

FRED ANDERSON/BLACK STAR

Nancy Kissinger: quality testing

Mind & Body

The business of therapy

Your friendly local merchant as social worker? It's not as fanciful as it sounds. Out in Racine, Wisconsin, the local mental health association is training tavernkeepers to spot and assist emotionally disturbed patrons. Primarily, the bartenders are trained to be good listeners and to pick up disguised cries for help. They are taught to advise people about where to turn for low-cost professional counseling. Meanwhile, the University of Rochester Medical School has undertaken a similar program. Barbers are being trained to help customers cope with difficulties ranging from VD and alcoholism to marital discord. Like the barkeeps, the barbers are taught to listen and to suggest counseling alternatives. Says one of the Racine bartenders, "First and foremost we're businessmen, and we aren't going to jeopardize our businesses by interfering in our customers' lives. But we can direct our customers to the help they need."

Taking the teeth out of drills

The process is an elaborate one, but the reward may eliminate the need for the dentist's unpleasant drill. A University of Rochester dental researcher believes he has found a form of preventive dentistry that will keep teeth pearly for a lifetime without dietary sacrifices.

On top of every dentist's prescription—brushing often and using dental floss daily—the method involves applying a fluoride gel to harden and slicken the enamel of teeth; washing the mouth with a calcium-rich remineralization solution; and chewing a special sugarless gum to stimulate salivary cleansing.

The method works so well that it even saves the teeth of patients getting powerful radiation doses for head and neck cancer. Of 73 such patients put on the cavity-prevention program, not one developed any tooth decay. Traditionally, such treatments have destroyed the teeth by shrinking the glands that produce saliva, an indispensable cleansing agent.

Don't cancel your dentist appointments yet, however. The

method hasn't been fully tested, and even then, manufacturers for the specially required products will have to be found.

Aspirin headaches

Aspirin, the most popular non-prescription pain reliever in America, may soon appear with labels warning that it is potentially dangerous to your health. At present, Americans consume over 20 billion aspirin a year—or an annual average of nearly 100 per person.

For two years, a panel of seven scientific experts, consisting of doctors and pharmacologists, has been studying aspirin in an advisory capacity to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Apparently they have found evidence that aspirin is potentially harmful not only to people with stomach ulcers—as has long been believed—but also to pregnant women and people with asthma, bleeding problems, arthritis and allergic reactions. The group has determined, for instance, that the popular pain-reliever has blood-thinning qualities and can eat away at the stomach lining. In March they are expected to recommend to the FDA that a written warning about the potential dangers of aspirin be added to all packages, in much the same way cigarette packages now carry such cautions.

Post Scripts

Keeping *Posted* (*NT:* Nov. 14, 1975)

The longest newspaper strike in Washington, D.C., history was going into its third month at *New Times'* deadline.

Graham: final offer?

On December 7 the pressmen's union overwhelmingly rejected a settlement—in a 249-5 vote that *Washington Post* publisher Katharine Graham said would be her last offer. Despite the strike, the paper is back in almost full operation. All but two of the *Post* 's 72 presses are working, and the paper is nearly at pre-strike length. Members of management are working long hours in the composing room and selling classified ads.

Initial news reports quoting officials of the newspaper put damages in the millions of dollars; later accounts reduced the figure to $1 million. The damages continue to be a major issue in the strike, and now considerable dispute has arisen over the real figure. A recent report issued by the rank-and-file strike support committee said that the "best available evidence indicates that the actual physical damage inflicted on the *Washington Post* presses by members of the pressmen's union comes to under $30,000." The report was written by striking Guild member Lewis Diuguid, a *Post* foreign editor. John Dower, *Post* vice-president of communications, refused to comment on the report and said only that damages are in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Dower also said that he has kept track of alleged violence by union members against non-strikers. He claims to have nine pages of approximately 100 incidents that cover everything from verbal harassment and obscene telephone calls to tire slashing and physical assault. However, pressmen's union strike coordinator Cecil Rust refutes Dower's statistics. "There have been no more than four incidents at most, and including verbal harassment, you can add a couple more."

One incident that definitely took place involved Jules Witcover, a *Post* national reporter. Witcover was beaten up, allegedly by striking pressman Jack McIntosh, and suffered a cut ear, several chipped teeth and cuts above the eye requiring six stitches. Witcover refuses to comment on the incident but says that D.C. police are bringing criminal charges.

Meanwhile, a grand jury investigation into the violence is pending, according to Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Chapman, but has been temporarily held up by a legal technicality.

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ILLUSTRATION BY ALLEN WELKIS

GERALD FORD AND THE POLITICS OF POLLUTION

In the razzle-dazzle of the "energy crisis," no one has noticed, but the President is picking up a shovel to help big business bury the environmental movement

By Arthur Lubow

The frontier has returned, and, despite a generation of frontier rhetoric, it's not to be found in the starry heavens or the urban ghettos or the atomic nucleus. The new frontier is right where we left the old one, west of the Mississippi and on to the Rocky Mountains. Frederick Jackson Turner spoke too soon in 1893 when he identified the closing of the frontier as the pivotal event in American history. It may be less photogenic this go-round—the buckskin pioneer in a Conestoga wagon has been replaced by the Exxon geologist on an oil rig—but the westward push is on again. Land back East been all used up, man can't move a muscle without someone tellin' him what to do, looks like it's time to move on. This time there are no cotton crops leaching the soil, but Appalachia has been turned into a lunar desert. This time there are no colonial authorities breathing down a farmer's neck, but the United Mine Workers are getting uppity and state governments are shaking a fist at the sooty air. This time there's no homestead act granting a family a hundred acres, but a government giveaway is shelling out billions of dollars in coal and offshore oil rights to multinational corporations. Times change, and this is the future we're blasting into. Make way for the energy express!

Somewhere behind the wagon train, environmental concerns have been forgotten. Waving reports of economic recession in one hand and fuel shortage statistics in the other, Gerald Ford has played cheerleader at the funeral of the environmental movement. It's a well-timed funeral. Environmental interest has historically been a luxury of rich people in rich nations in times of prosperity. A

You say and we say .

YOU, HOWEVER, PROBABLY SAY BLOODY MARY. WE SAY BLOODY MARIA.

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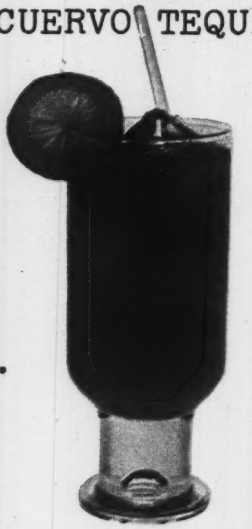

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middle-class movement highlighted by the Earth Day celebration of April 1970 left a legacy of laws to curb air and water pollution. But the housewife scraping to meet her food budget hasn't the hours or the stamina to picket against highway construction and sooty air. President Ford has skillfully set up a trade-off: jobs and prosperity or clean air and water. It's a bogus disjunction. "They take any criticism as being, Oh, you want to go back to living in caves with a candle," complains environmentalist Joe Browder. Opinion polls reveal that the public wants both economic prosperity and a clean environment, and, despite Administration flimflam, that's not an unreasonable request.

Yet Ford has been doggedly singleminded: In his 16 months as President, he has delivered not one strong pro-environment speech. He has resisted virtually every environmental initiative from Congress, and he has come up with none of his own. What's more, he has tried to relax existing standards. At a time when the cancer rate is increasing faster than ever before and 85 percent of cancer deaths in America are thought to be caused by environmental factors, he wants to weaken pending legislation that would check the flood of man-made carcinogens into our air, water and food. He wants to eliminate "no significant deterioration" restrictions that would keep clean air clean. He has twice vetoed legislation to control the strip mining that blights the landscape. He has favored handing out offshore oil leases to giant corporations at bargain prices and with undue haste. He has withdrawn support from a bill originally proposed by Nixon that might have helped the states control the conversion of pastures into parking lots. He has appointed two secretaries to head the Department of Interior, custodian of the nation's resources: The first, who had given away all the state coal reserves to mega-corporations while governor of Wyoming, resigned after a month; he was replaced by Ford's second choice, a man with no experience on environmental or resource issues. Asked if the Administration has taken any environmental stand that was not in response to congressional action, Domestic Council Associate Director George Humphreys admits, "Not since I've been here." He explains: "The biggest priority issues facing this Administration are energy and the economy. The environmental issue is not the primary issue facing this Administration."

Ford's defenders argue that the ecology boom of five years ago was an overreaction. "In the late Sixties there was a swing to the feeling that the environment is all that's important," says James Liverman, assistant administrator of the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA). "Before that, business was all that was important. What the Administration is trying to do is bring it back to some middle ground." There's no doubt that Congress in 1970 was groping in the dark for solutions to its new-found "environmental crisis." Discussing the original clean air and water legislation, Harvard associate professor Greg Ingram remarks, "It's as if a blind man had walked up to a machine and grabbed a lever." But the remarkable thing, as Ingram observes, is that Congress grabbed the right lever. The laws drafted in the early Seventies went a long way toward correcting widespread pollution.

The men in the White House are still pulling levers blindly, but the names on the levers have changed. The current crisis—energy—is being headlined with as much hysterical fervor as the environment ever stirred up.

"When Ford wants information on auto emissions, he's going to call General Motors, not Friends of the Earth"

"This nation is facing an all-out energy crisis," warns Jim Liverman. "You gotta go nuclear as far as you can hit it, you gotta go with offshore oil, you gotta go with synthetic fuels." Twin specters—a cold, dark winter and a rapacious, scimitar-wielding Arab—fuel the energy express as effectively as ecodisaster once mobilized the environmentalists.

Led by the President, a cluster of agencies, old and new, are unraveling the achievements of the environmental movement. The executive branch is divided into different departments lobbying for different interest groups. Commerce looks out for Eastern industry, Interior for Western mining and grazing, Agriculture for Midwestern farmers and agribusiness, Labor for organized unions. Against this powerful array stand the puny Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), a White House group created in 1969, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which celebrated its fifth birthday on December 2. In the beginning, when the environment was a politically potent issue, CEQ and EPA did fairly well for themselves. Now they must oppose not only the established cabinet departments but the muscular Federal Energy Administration (FEA), the cabinet-level interagency Energy Resources Council and the somewhat more anemic Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA). In 1975 "energy" is the password to the circles of power.

The welter of acronyms should not obscure the basic picture. CEQ, with no regulatory teeth and a tiny staff, can only draft option papers that it hopes the President will accept. EPA, which is charged with enforcing a multitude of federal regulations, is persistently understaffed and severely underbudgeted. Fighting to keep its head above water, it has no chance to take a long, careful look at the course of the nation's development. The President has a four-year outlook, and the Congress thinks in terms of two to six years. ERDA, which was established to examine the nation's energy needs, is merely a stapled together amalgam of the high-cost technology R&D programs that industry appreciates. ERDA wouldn't dream of pressuring industrialists such as car manufacturers with government research proving that what the industry calls impossible is very possible indeed. "We cannot and we ought not expect to be competitors to the auto industry," explains Austin Heller, assistant administrator of ERDA for conservation. So if the Congress, the President and the executive agencies aren't planning American development, who is behind the wheel? Who else but industry. Huge corporations are deciding the fate of America's resources with the help of their willing accomplice in the White House.

On a trip to Cincinnati last July 3, between the dedication of a National Environmental Research Center and a campaign speech in Cleveland, Ford found an hour to meet with a group of environmentalists, most of whom traipsed 400 miles from their Washington offices to accept the President's invitation. Their meeting followed Ford's dedication speech declaring a "détente with nature," a speech that warned, "If accomplishing every worthy environmental objective would slow down our effort to regain energy independence and a stronger economy, then I must weigh all factors involved." The environmentalists left the meeting unsatisfied, and they have been trying to arrange a sequel ever since. On August 20 they met with Dr. Ted Marrs in the White House. "Dr. Marrs' job is to arrange meet-

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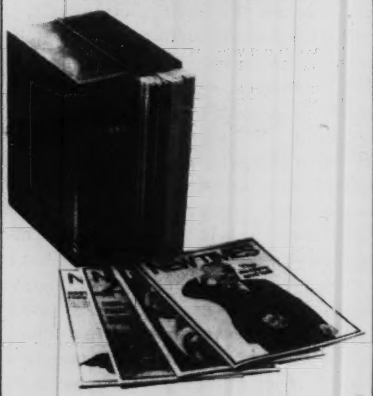

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ings for the President with kook groups," notes Bill Butler, a lawyer with the Environmental Defense Fund. "The meeting he arranged right before us was with paraplegics and immediately after us with a distant group of Indians from a faraway reservation. Business interests can see Ford all the time. It takes us a year and a half to set up each meeting." In response to Butler's complaint, Humphreys says only, "I wouldn't cast insults on paraplegics."

Businessmen have far less trouble than either paraplegics or environmentalists in seeing their President. When Ford pocket-vetoed the first of two strip mine bills last December, he was vacationing at the Vail, Colorado, home of Richard Bass, an owner of extensive federal coal leases who stood to lose $100 million in reclamation fees if the bill passed. Gerald Ford is a small-town, self-made man, and the friends he respects tend to be businessmen. "When Ford wants information on auto emissions, he's going to call General Motors, not Friends of the Earth," says Jim Rathlesberger of the Congressional Environmental Study Conference. "Can you imagine him calling the Sierra Club?" The assistant to a liberal Republican congressman adds, "Most of these Republicans were in their local Kiwanis Club, and now they're in a bigger Kiwanis Club."

Should Western areas with clean air be permitted to pollute up to national levels, or should their air be kept roughly as clean as it is?

Kiwanis Club businessmen calibrate issues in dollars and cents. Ford's strip mine veto is a good example of the shortsighted profit-oriented thinking that is guiding this nation's development. The coal corporations, many of which are owned by the oil multinationals, oppose any legislation that would force reclamation of the land they strip-mine. Without regulations, a company can tear through an area, gashing the hillsides, ruining the streams, setting off landslides, creating a desert. In the semi-arid lands of the Northern Great Plains, which are now being eyed by coal companies, reclamation might require the import of water and could be quite expensive. But what does "expensive" mean in this context? In a good 50-foot thick seam, each acre of land will yield about 100,000 tons of coal. Sold in Chicago for $15 to $20 a ton, the coal will be worth between $1 million and $2 million. Without the coal, that acre is simply poor grazing land worth $300, and reclamation of strip mined land will cost many times the $300-an-acre figure. So it seems economically foolish to reclaim the land. Yet the coal provides more than enough money, and isn't the land worth more than its market value? "What is the true value of the land?" asks M.I.T. professor David Rose. "When you sell it to someone, you hadn't expected that he'd make it vanish or turn it into craters of the moon. If you priced all the land in the lower 48 states at $400 an acre, the country would be worth one year's GNP. The true social value of the land wouldn't be represented. Would you sell off the country at 400 bucks an acre to a Saudi Arabian sheik?"

The orange spindletops of Bryce Canyon stand out sharply against the blue Utah sky. Southern Utah contains some of the most spectacular scenery in the world: sandstone arches and canyons, glittering green meadows, fantastic rock sculptures that change color and form as the sunlight shifts and the tingling breezes blow. Soon, in addition to four national parks, southern Utah may possess five enormous coal-burning power plants.

Even with the power plants, the canyon lands of Utah will seem sparkling clean to tourists from Detroit and Los Angeles. But there are vista points in Bryce Canyon where a visitor can now see clear out for 86 miles. That view would be a casualty of Progress. Bryce Canyon is just one of many Western spots that have air far cleaner than the minimum national requirement. Should these areas be permitted to pollute up to national levels, or should their air be kept roughly as clean as it is? The House and Senate are now considering an amendment to the Clean Air Act that would set limits to the deterioration of local air quality. Without strong "no significant deterioration" standards, a manufacturer will have an incentive to relocate in Wyoming and smoke away in the mountains rather than install the expensive pollution control technology he would need to stay in Gary, Indiana.

"No significant deterioration" is a big issue, and the Administration is split into two camps on it. The Federal Energy Administration opposes stringent standards. "Why do anything for the moment?" asks Roger Sant, FEA assistant

administrator for energy conservation and environment. "EPA has promulgated some pretty decent regs that are enforced now. We'd rather have nothing on no significant deterioration." But EPA disagrees. "We've been quite aggressive throughout the discussions on the House side," says Roger Strelow, EPA assistant administrator in charge of air pollution control. "Without the analysis we've been doing for them, some of these things would never have come up." Another EPA assistant administrator, Alvin Alm, adds, "The Administration has been pretty open on no significant deterioration. FEA doesn't like it and we're in favor of it, and we can each state our position."

Yet, despite EPA denials, congressional staff members complain that the agency has not been providing them with adequate support and analysis. "They wouldn't say if they liked something or not," says an analyst for the House Subcommittee on Health and Environment. "They submitted an academic discussion without a bottom line." The limp EPA posture seems to date back to last September, when a member of the EPA legislative liaison staff supplied a series of written answers to a Senate subcommittee's questions on the Clean Air Act. When the Office of Management and Budget—the executive branch clearing house and national budget drafter—discovered this bit of assistance, phones began to buzz and the guillotine began to creak. OMB Circular A-19 requires all agencies and departments to clear positions with OMB before presenting them to Congress. The EPA official regarded his answers as information; OMB viewed them as a position. EPA Administrator Russell Train quickly issued a memorandum reminding staff members of Circular A-19, but to make sure the message had sunk in, an OMB executive called EPA and asked what would be the impact of a ten-man cut on the EPA legislative liaison staff of 40. The cut was never made, but the point was—unmistakably.

WIDE WORLD

FRED WARD/BLACK STAR

Ford's high-level hatchet men: Federal Energy Administrator Frank Zarb (top) and James Lynn, director of the Office of Management and Budget (bottom)

EPA is a beleaguered agency. Its crisis is no longer in vogue. "EPA went from being pretty much of a fair-haired boy to having to fight and scrap for its positions," says Richard Johnson, former EPA acting assistant administrator for enforcement. Every time EPA issues a substantial new regulation, OMB requires an interagency "quality of life" review. The sides stack up with a monotonous predictability—EPA on one side, virtually everyone else on the other. EPA can count on the support of only the puny Council on Environmental Quality. On the other side, it can rely on the opposition of the Federal Energy Administration, whose administrator, Frank Zarb, told a *Science* reporter last August: "But we're [FEA and EPA] always going to have opposing points of view. We can start out that way, but that doesn't mean we can't sit down and work out these differences in the best interests of both sides." On "no significant deterioration" and strip mine legislation—perhaps the two most controversial environmental issues of the day—"the best interests of both sides" have turned out to be the interests of FEA.

FEA is on top of the heap now because it is coping with the President's number one crisis. But Commerce, Interior and Agriculture also combat EPA consistently. Any EPA victory requires a protracted struggle. On a recent regulation to outlaw cans and require deposit bottles in federal facilities, even the Department of Defense opposed EPA, since its worldwide military installations would have to pay most of the costs. Commerce didn't like the regulation either: Business viewed it as an inroad leading to an eventual ban on cans and no-return bottles. But after months of bickering, EPA published its draft regulation in the November 13 Federal Register. "We exercise our own statutory authority," says EPA Assistant Administrator Alvin Alm. "We hear everybody out and then the administrator puts the regulations in the Federal Register in a draft for comment." Over in the Executive Office Building, George Humphreys was giving Ford all the credit: "The President was convinced and he put

The auto emission shuffle

Politics in Washington sometimes seems like an elaborate ballet. The auto emissions squabble—how much of what chemical should be permitted out of whose tailpipe in what year—illustrates one rule of the dance: On environmental issues, the White House will always find a position to the right of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Congress in 1970 established incremental auto pollution standards. When the White House last January came out with a proposal to relax these standards for the next five years, environmentalists grumbled.

The pollutants at the center of the controversy are nitrogen oxides, which have been linked to such illnesses as cancer and heart disease. Although the other regulated chemicals in auto emissions can be eliminated in different ways, catalytic conversion is the only technology that can cut back nitrogen oxides to very low levels on schedule.

For years the Environmental Protection Agency pooh-poohed warnings that the catalytic convertor would create a new problem: sulfuric acid that forms soon after the gases emerge from the tailpipe. Then suddenly, the EPA itself discovered the danger. Meeting the strict 1977 legislated standards would lead to an expanded number of high-powered sulfuric acid-emitting convertors on the road. Instead of requiring improvements on the convertor, EPA Administrator Russell Train on March 5 hastily granted a one-year suspension of the 1977 legislated standards. He set the levels for 1977 even lower than the President's proposal.

What was Ford to do? The White House was pushing modified standards at a time when EPA was favoring a one-year requirement that was even more acceptable to the industry. As gracefully as possible, Ford moved to the right of EPA. On June 27, the President proposed a five-year freeze at the weak 1976 levels. He emphasized the sulfuric acid problem, although he noted other benefits of his suggestion: increased fuel economy, lower car costs and added jobs.

The other benefits are the crucial consideration, since the President's sulfuric acid nightmares are unconvincing. The vast bulk of sulfuric acid pollution comes from the burning of coal, which Ford is encouraging. And Ford has been far more alarmist than the scientific community. Three weeks before the President's announcement, the National Academy of Sciences reported no obstacles to the fulfillment of the legislated standards.

Undoubtedly, economic pressure from Detroit provides the thrust behind the President's sulfuric acid health warnings. If the President prevails, and Congress weakens emission standards, concern for public health will not be the reason. As on all other environmental decisions, Ford's choreographers are businessmen not scientists. **– A.L.**

the guidelines out." Whatever the fable, the moral is clear: EPA can go to the mat only so many times.

The major EPA "victory" under Ford was an Administration commitment to "scrubbers" on smokestacks. It was a funny kind of victory, since it permitted many power plants—the major burners of the coal being scrubbed—a ten-year grace period to use intermittent controls, an unenforceable system that one environmentalist calls "the rhythm method of pollution control." Yet EPA views the decision as a triumph. "It signaled to the utilities industry that the whole government was behind scrubbers, that at best intermittent controls was a temporary solution for rural plants," says Alm. "For utilities companies it was a major defeat." The EPA celebrations become more understandable if placed in context. Last winter, when the Administration was drafting a position on the Clean Air Act amendments, some agencies wanted to tack on economic and social tests to virtually every authority within the act. In other words, if EPA wished to outlaw a hazardous pollutant, it would first have to determine the economic and social costs of such a ban. Furthermore, some Administration forces wanted the federal government to require states to set pollution standards no higher than the federal ones. It was a one-two punch that would have knocked out the environmental movement.

Toxic Substances

EPA was able to talk its way out of those manacles, but it's fighting a rearguard battle against a President who dislikes federal regulation. EPA input into executive branch decisions is shrinking. "I would be shocked to hear that the President would make any environmental decision without getting the Russ Train/Russ Peterson point of view," said George Humphreys, referring to the heads of EPA and CEQ. But Humphreys was either misinformed or disingenuous, for as he spoke those words, a letter to Representative John McCollister was going out from the Office of Management and Budget down the hall. In that letter OMB Director James Lynn announced that the Administration was throwing its support behind McCollister's Toxic Substances Control bill. One of four bills proposed in the House, the McCollister legislation is universally regarded as the chemical industry bill—that is, legislation that would do nothing to check the flow of toxins and cancer-causing agents pouring into our environment at ever more rapid rates.

The amazing thing is that the Administration took this position without even consulting the President's Council on Environmental Quality, which has been studying the problem for nearly five years. Working on the understanding that the President would support a tough bill, CEQ didn't find out about the policy switch until McCollister had already received Lynn's letter. And EPA, the other executive branch environmental office, wasn't brought in on the decision until the very last minute, when the letter had already been drafted. Russell Train was out of town, and his deputy merely tacked on a qualifying final paragraph before the letter was posted. "You really can't say much about this," EPA Assistant Administrator Al Alm mused sadly a couple of days later. "We didn't know about it till the last minute, and I still don't know what happened."

Across town at CEQ, Warren Muir fumed. Responsible for drafting the Administration's proposed toxic substances legislation, Muir had told a reporter just the day before, "If the Toxic Substances Control Act were passed in a form similar to the one we recommended, I would be surprised if the President vetoed it. It's a unanimous Administration position." Now he could only say, "I obviously didn't know about the thing. The whole thing came as a complete surprise." Apparently the President had made the decision, but on what basis? No one had asked CEQ or EPA to prepare an option paper. No one had told CEQ or EPA of McCollister's July letter asking for the Administration's position on toxic substances control. Lynn's OMB had cleared CEQ congressional testimony supporting strong toxic substances legislation. Now Lynn had neatly sliced the rug out from under the Administration's environmentalists.

It was a last laugh for Lynn, who

had opposed strong toxic substances control back in the beginning, in 1971, when he was a general counsel in the Commerce Department. Representing the chemical industry's viewpoint, Lynn had lost out to the environmentalists who were enjoying their Earth Day heyday. Now that he was at OMB, Lynn could compensate the chemical industry for his shortcomings at Commerce. Not one to miss an opportunity, Lynn also used his OMB leverage to sabotage land use legislation, which he had opposed in another prior bureaucratic incarnation—as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Land Use Planning

The sorry history of land use legislation dates back to the Nixon Administration. In his major 1973 address on the environment, President Nixon put a land use bill at the top of his priority list. Apparently John Ehrlichman's offspring, the Nixon land use proposal was remarkably tough, even stronger than congressional versions. It would have encouraged the states to draft comprehensive development plans so that commercial growth did not needlessly blight the landscape or ruin good agricultural land. But the Nixon land use bill was a torpedo fired off a sinking ship, and it didn't get very far. By February 1974 the President was floundering for conservative Republican support on Watergate. A group of right-wing Republicans, led by Sam Steiger and John Rhodes, hated the idea of land use planning. They went to the White House and returned to the House Rules Committee with a startling message: The President no longer supported land use legislation. The bill died in committee, a casualty of impeachment politics.

When land use legislation returned to the stage for Act Two, Ford was in the White House. The bill that reached the House Interior Committee was quite mild—it would have authorized grants of $515 million over the next six years to states that drew up land use plans—but to conservative Republicans, it was anathema. Faced with the threat of a Reagan-led conservative defection within his party, temperamentally opposed to both federal spending and federal intervention, Ford was not inclined to back the bill. At that point, Jim Lynn entered the scene. As head of HUD under Nixon, Lynn had unsuccessfully fought federal land use authority, which would have been placed under Interior instead of HUD. Now he had a second chance. After a meeting with Lynn, the President decided not to support land use legislation, and on July 15 the bill died in committee.

Lynn and Zarb have emerged as the President's high-level hatchet men on environmental legislation. Rogers Morton, who supported both strip mine and land use legislation, exerted some moderating influence as Secretary of Interior, but he was shuffled from Interior to Commerce and then out of the Administration. Although a friend of the President's, Morton turned out to be not much of a bureaucratic infighter as Interior Secretary. He inherited a department that had just lost its control of fisheries, marine mining and water pollution control, and he sat by glumly as the new Federal Energy Administration and the Energy Research and Development Administration gobbled up the juicy energy pie. Ironically, under Morton, the first Eastern Secretary, Interior became more clearly than ever the representative of Western mining and grazing interests. And Interior fared even worse when Morton left, for the appointment of the new Secretary, Stanley Hathaway, was tied up for three months in stormy Senate confirmation hearings.

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Interior Appointments

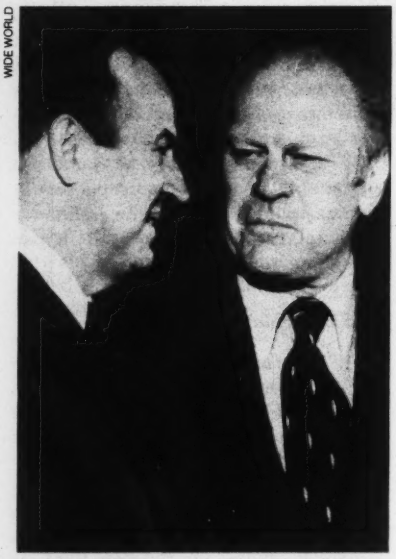
Formerly governor of Wyoming, Hathaway was opposed by environmentalists, who condemned his wholesale leasing of state-owned coal lands to strip miners. When Hathaway became governor, one-third of Wyoming coal lands were under lease. In eight years he leased virtually every remaining acre at ridiculously low prices. In the Senate Hathaway defended himself against complaints about his lack of environmental concern by stressing that only one state-leased coal mine was actually producing. In other words, as a senator pointed out, Hathaway had sold the leases to speculators who would only begin to ravage the land when the price of coal soared high enough.

The Senate eventually confirmed Hathaway, but he lasted little more than a month before retiring in a state of "depression." There was an obvious replacement—Acting Secretary Kent Frizzell, a conservative Kansas Republican with strong party support in the House and Senate. But Frizzell had repeatedly antagonized then-Secretary of the Interior Morton by lobbying strongly against congressional legislation that Morton favored on strip mining and land use. He had worked on a 10-million-acre offshore oil lease plan that had embarrassed the department and Morton in particular. What's more, he had a record sure to trigger another Senate battle. The choice was clear: Kent Frizzell or Anybody Else. Ford chose Anybody Else, aka Tom Kleppe, a former congressman from North Dakota and head of the Small Business Administration. "The best thing you can say about Kleppe," remarks environmental lawyer Bill Butler, "is that he plays a good game of handball and comes from North Dakota, and that's about all."

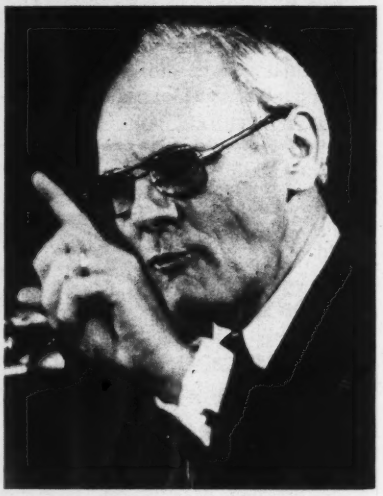
Offshore Oil

As Secretary, Kleppe inherits the pile of papers that helped drive Hathaway over the brink. On top of the heap are option papers on offshore oil. Oil on the outer continental shelf became a federal responsibility 20 years ago, when Washington drew a line three miles off the coasts. Up to three miles, the oil-bearing tidewater lands belong to the states. Beyond the three mile limit lie the federal lands of the outer continental shelf.

Oil drilling on the outer continental shelf has been confined almost entirely to the Gulf of Mexico (the major exception is the area off Santa Barbara, site of a disastrous oil spill in 1969). Then, a year ago, a leaked Interior Department memo revealed a plan to lease 10 million acres of untouched frontier land on the outer continental shelf. That was more land than had been leased in the entire 20-year history of the program.



WIDE WORLD

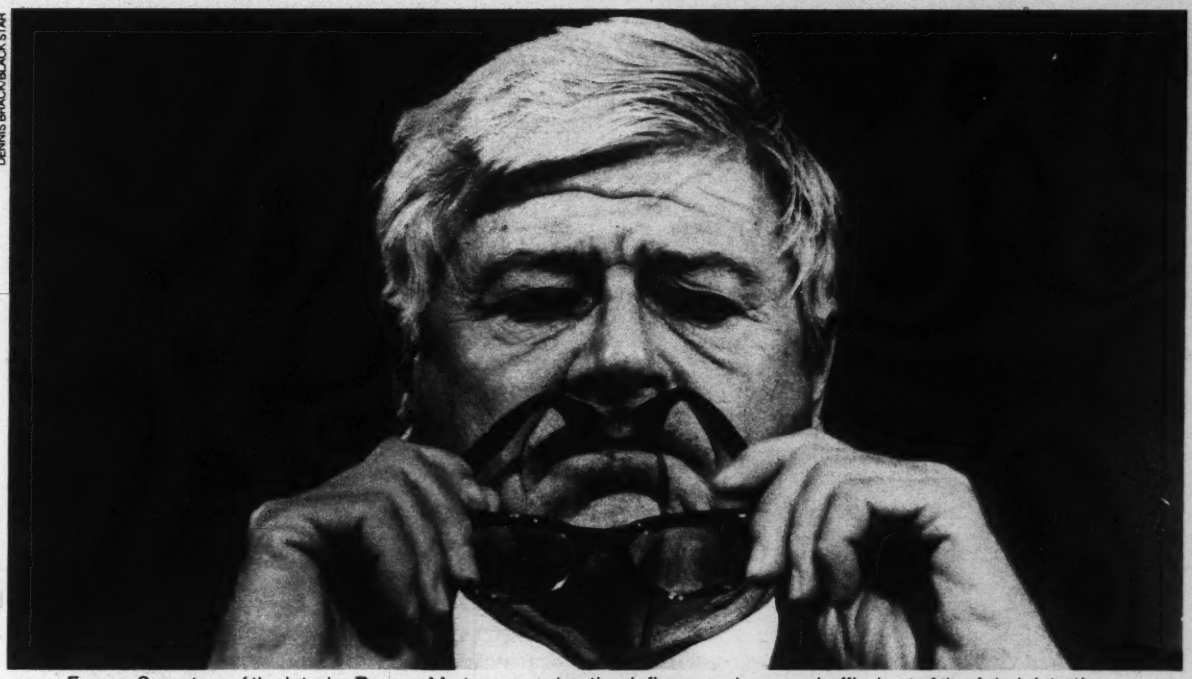


WIDE WORLD

Ford and his men at Interior: Stanley Hathaway (top) and Thomas Kleppe.

From an environmentalist's viewpoint, offshore oil is a relatively good energy source. The threat of a bad spill and the blight of onshore service facilities pale next to, say, the scars and rubble of strip mining or the mountains of baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) left by oil shale extraction. But the Administration's rushed leasing schedule, which left no time for environmental impact studies, soon provoked loud objections to the offshore oil plans.

Is it necessary to lease so much land so soon? A Senate Judiciary Committee study suggests that if the oil corporations exploited their Gulf of Mexico



DENNIS BRACK/BLACK STAR

Former Secretary of the Interior Rogers Morton: a moderating influence who was shuffled out of the Administration.

reserves more efficiently, production would double. Corporations waiting for the price of oil to increase are sitting on their offshore oil deposits. At the same time, they are buying up more offshore leases, for as the Administration dumps unprecedented amounts of land on the market, the laws of supply and demand will lower the price of an acre to bargain rates.

The government-administered bidding system for offshore oil leases knocks out everyone but the multinational energy corporations. Companies submit multimillion-dollar bonus bids. The winner must then pay a tiny 16 2/3 percent royalty to the government once his wells start producing. Small corporations haven't the capital reserves to finance enormous up-front bonus payments. Nor have they the resources to make intelligent bids. Since exploration is left to the companies, small firms and the government proceed blindly. Only the mega-corporations can accurately assess the value of these lands. At a Texas offshore sale in spring 1974, for example, the government estimated its ten most valuable tracts to be worth $101,196,849, but the mega-corporations bid a total of $232,571,373. At a Louisiana lease sale around the same time, Exxon bid $76.2 million for a tract the government had valued at $5.6 million.

Perhaps the most curious part of the offshore oil controversy has been the Administration's attitude toward the states. Although Ford loves to mouth homilies on the need to return power to local government, on offshore oil his Administration has ridden roughshod over the wishes of the coastal states. A year ago Ford presented coastal state governors with his accelerated leasing schedule, which opens with the sale of Southern California leases this month. Since then, the President's plans have become snarled in knot after knot of lawsuits by state and regional governments. The state of California, along with a coalition of 11 cities and three counties, filed suit in federal court on November 21, charging that the Department of Interior had failed to consider the environmental impact of offshore oil production and had failed to coordinate federal outer continental shelf plans with state programs for the tidewater lands within the three mile limit.

EPA is a beleaguered agency. Its crisis is no longer in vogue

Development of the tidewater lands raises other sticky issues. The Office of Coastal Zone Management is supposed to encourage state planning for the development of these lands. Although nominally under the Department of Commerce and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Office of Coastal Zone Management must kowtow to the energy czar, Frank Zarb of the Federal Energy Administration. Zarb has complained that state development plans pay too little attention to the nation's energy needs. On offshore oil and coastal zone development, the Federal Energy Administration, the Energy Research and Development Administration and the Federal Power Commission stand on one side; the states and environmentalists are on the other. Although state quibbling is a roadblock on the path of the energy express, the Administration plans to blast through, with the energy corporations providing the firepower.

Strip Mining

The energy corporations have also fueled the resistance to Congress' major environmental initiative this year: federal regulations on strip mining. The scarred and barren wasteland of Appalachia bears eloquent witness to the greed of coal companies that chew up the land and spit out the miners in their race to make a buck. A law that Congress passed twice would have imposed minimal land reclamation demands on coal operators who are now ogling the virgin coal deposits of the West. President Ford vetoed the strip mine bill twice. The first time, in December, Congress presented the bill so late in the year that the President was able to pocket-veto it. The second time, after Congress had approved the bill again by a wide margin, Ford issued a veto message on May 20. "With a deep

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sense of regret," the President explained that the bill could cost as many as 36,000 jobs, cut 1977 coal production anywhere from 40 to 162 million tons, increase the price of coal through a reclamation tax, put small miners out of business and hamstring the nation's energy flexibility in a period of uncertainty. The vote to override the veto was scheduled for the next day. According to Stan Scoville, assistant to Representative Morris Udall (a major proponent of the bill), the House would have failed by some 30 votes to muster the two-thirds majority needed to override a veto. So, in an unusual maneuver, Udall yanked the vote from the schedule and held hearings June 3 on the President's veto.

When they heard that Udall had called a hearing to investigate the pedigree of their bastardized figures, Administration officials—particularly those in the Federal Energy Administration—scurried to find support for their contentions. How had the Administration arrived at the figures of 40 to 162 million tons production loss and 36,000 sacrificed jobs? Using the direst interpretations of the legislation's impact, a task force led by analysts from the Interior Department Bureau of Mines had decided which mines would have to be closed and which reserves would be unexploitable. Totaling up the possible annual output of these mines and reserves, the task force had called this loss of capacity a loss of production. In other words, the task force had assumed that all of the nation's 1.5 trillion tons of coal resources (of which less than one-fifth could be strip-mined in any case) would be called into play by 1977.

Once the task force had made that giant step, the job loss figure was only a hop and a jump away. Using the production loss figure, the task force estimated how many men would have been needed to mine that coal and to service the miners. No one consulted the Labor Department or the United Mine Workers, but who needed to? The task force was talking about a loss of jobs that didn't even exist. Defending these inflated statistics in the post-veto Udall hearings, FEA Deputy Administrator John Hill referred to the multiplier number developed by West Virginia University professor William Miernyk: For every coal mining job added or subtracted, there is a corresponding increase or decrease of 0.8 jobs in related or service industries. The Administration used that figure to puff out its job loss estimate. Such use of Miernyk's data is quite selective, however, for Miernyk himself has testified on three occasions in favor of stronger strip mine legislation than the congressional version. "In my opinion, the bill vetoed would have cost the country no strip mine jobs and no coal production loss," the economist said last month. "It was too weak to have any serious effect on the surface mine industry."

The Udall hearings demonstrated that the Administration's job and production loss statistics were enormous castles built out of air. At the hearings, not only did John Hill misstate the facts in an effort to show that the vetoed bill would have put small miners out of business; his superior, Frank Zarb, backed away from Ford's statement that the bill's "tax provisions . . . would be excessive and unnecessarily increase the price of coal."

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Why the lies? If the Administration's explanations are false, why *did* the President veto the strip mine bill? Part of Ford's opposition was based on principle: As presidential adviser George Humphreys puts it, "I think he has a philosophical position that there's too much federal regulation. The President's general attitude is that we can within reasonable bounds reach the nation's energy goals through the free enterprise system with less regulatory effort on the part of the federal government." But not even Gerald Ford makes ultimate decisions by the principles of Calvin ("The business of America is business") Coolidge. He makes them to satisfy his constituency, and, in this case, businessmen had good specific reasons to oppose H.R. 25, the vetoed strip mine bill.

Among the lengthy list of regulations in H.R. 25 there are several that particularly upset the business community. Citizens' suit provisions would have allowed local mining opponents to force EPA to take action against strip miners. A 35-cent-a-ton reclamation tax would have skimmed off a bit of the industry's super profits (coal is one of the few industries that has prospered during the current recession). A watered-down section would have given some protection to alluvial valley floors, the fertile areas that provide ranchers with winter hay for their livestock and often make grazing viable on huge arid spreads. These three restrictions were unpleasant. But the provision that outraged the industry most was the "surface owner consent" clause.

Although Western coal lies near the surface, it is underground, often beneath sheep or cattle ranches. The ranch owners possess the rights to the surface land; the coal companies own leases for the mineral rights. Under existing laws, the coal miners may be able to force the ranchers off the land. The new law, with careful provisos to prevent windfall profits to landowners, would have protected the rights of the owners of the surface estate.

The coal industry has taken pains to pretend it is small miners who would be penalized by such laws. A convoy of hundreds of coal trucks manned by small Appalachian miners twisted through Washington in early April before the congressional vote. But behind the parades, the coal industry's clout comes not from the shoestring outfits in West Virginia but from the chairmen of such huge oil corporations as Exxon and Arco. The oil multinationals have become energy multinationals. Beginning in 1966, when Continental Oil Company—the eighth largest oil corporation—acquired Consolidation Coal Company—the second largest coal corporation—the "majors" have been moving into the coal business. Gulf, Exxon, Atlantic Richfield, Sun Oil and Mobil have quietly bought up federally owned coal leases on Western land. Most of the nation's high-grade coal lies east of the Mississippi, where over 89 percent of America's coal is currently mined. But to the major oil corporations, accustomed to dealing sheik to sheik, Eastern native conditions are unsatisfactory. In the East coal rights are owned by small companies. Different regulations are enforced by various regional authorities, and the reformed United Mine Workers has enrolled almost all the miners. To the pioneers in executive suites, the West beckons. Most of the Western coal is owned by the federal government, which can sign over the rights with one flourish of a pen. Regulation will be federal and, therefore, uniform at worst and nonexistent at best. Finally, the United Mine Workers has been less successful out West. Because of competition from other unions, it has had to sign

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weaker contracts. Weak regulations and weak unions: In a sad variation on an old historical theme, the West is once again the land of opportunity.

So it's quite natural for the "majors" to protect their elbow room at the expense of nature. And it follows that President Ford responds willingly to this important industrial constituency. The problem is that on Western coal development, to satisfy the coal miners President Ford must antagonize another Republican constituency—the ranchers. Should Joseph Papp decide to restage *Shane*, he would have to remold the Alan Ladd gunslinger as an environmental lawyer. In the first winning of the West, ranchers amassing pasture land forced out small farmers. In phase two the huge oil behemoths are pushing off the ranchers and tearing the coal out of the earth. The desperate ranchers have turned to environmentalists for support.

Presumably Ford doesn't much mind the combination of ranchers and "eco-freaks." What he worries about is the attraction that Ronald Reagan might exert on this conservative group. So he has tried to throw small tidbits to the grazers. In July he diluted a 1972 Nixon executive order and permitted the use of sodium cyanide against coyotes on public lands. It's not the coyotes that have caused a 30-year decline in the American sheep industry, but who cares about coyotes, and if a few eagles eat poisoned meat, well, isn't a handful of votes at the Republican convention worth a couple of eagles?

In another crumb for the ranchers, the Ford Administration tried to transfer sole control of three national game ranges to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Interior Department agency that is notorious for permitting overgrazing of its lands. BLM now shares the administration of these game ranges with the Fish and Wildlife Service, an Interior agency without an industrial ax to grind. Rogers Morton, then Secretary of the Interior, made the transfer decision last February. "There was some disappointment and a feeling that politics might have entered into it," says Douglas Wheeler, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Interior. "BLM has been more responsive to Western pressure. The big issue would be grazing. BLM has a positive mandate to permit grazing on its lands. That's not true of Fish and Wildlife Service." The House of Representatives agreed with Wheeler's division of Interior. Last month the House voted overwhelmingly to block the transfer of the game ranges to BLM.

When looking for an excuse to avoid its obligations—enforcing energy conservation, for example—the Ford Administration says that it doesn't want to interfere with people's lifestyles. Yet pollution and waste also affect people's lifestyles. "Not stopping pollution allows other people to impinge on my lifestyle by making my asthma worse," comments M.I.T. professor David Rose. Leasing federal coal lands to multinationals paves the way for a drastic change in the lives of small-town Westerners in the same way that the Alaska pipeline has shaken up the 49th state. Rushing offshore oil development will dramatically alter the way of life in many coastal communities.

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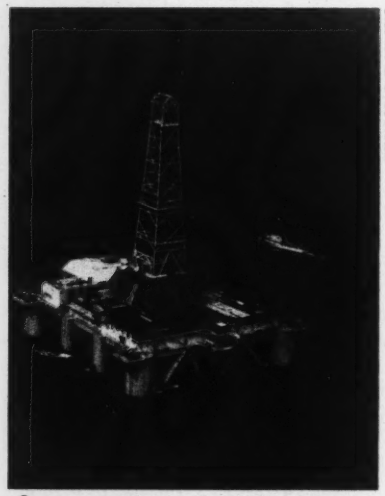
Every environmental decision affects lifestyles. Pollution control, like pollution, has a wide social impact. The strip mining case is typical. Reclamation will be directed by the same corporations that pollute, and the bigger companies have an edge over the smaller ones, since they have larger capital reserves and greater flexibility. In another industry a recent study by Bob Leone at the Harvard Business School suggests that most paper firms could meet stringent federal water pollution standards, but many small firms would be forced out of business. The industry's output would be only marginally affected, but the social composition of the industry would change markedly, with a greater shift toward monopoly.

Some changes in lifestyle could apparently provide large benefits at a small cost. Leone's study suggests that minor changes could substantially cut water pollution. For instance, again in the pulp and paper business, reducing the brightness of white paper by 10 percent would eliminate 24 percent of water pollution in the industry. Another academic study, this one of the automobile industry, used a scheme of six sizes of automobiles. Small cars eat less gasoline and consequently pollute less than large cars. "If everyone in the market moved down one size level in the fleet, you get all the emission standards for free and you have money left jangling in your pocket," says Harvard Associate Professor Greg Ingram, who worked on that National Academy of Sciences report. The question of duller paper and smaller cars is a market decision, however. If consumers want these products, industry will manufacture them. The Ford Administration has a ready-made answer to critics who want to cramp industry's elbow room: To require the production of less environmentally disastrous goods would be to impinge on people's lifestyles. To cut back national energy use would be a similar infringement, even though Americans consume energy at almost seven times the average world rate.

Environmental decisions are political decisions. The environmental movement of 1970 foolishly talked about a "spaceship earth" that we all share and that we all want to preserve. But the environment is not a separate, transcendent problem. It makes much more sense to look at the scarred Appalachian land, the oil slicks off Santa Barbara and the stinging air in Los Angeles as the magnified imprint of large corporations that are responsible to no one but their shareholders. The Mideastern oil embargo, which led to the dumping of environmental concerns, was a warning to multinationals that have relied on cheap exploitation of foreign resources. By buying federal coal and oil leases, these multinationals hope to preserve their stranglehold on American economic life. Undoubtedly, President Ford believes that mammoth concerns, with their fabulous wealth and limitless facilities, can exploit American resources with the greatest ef-



DENNIS BRACK/BLACK STAR

Government leases for drilling sites on the continental shelf have become a boondoggle for the Seventies.

ficiency. Houses will be heated, cars will be driven and the socio-economic structure will be preserved. That is the goal of energy independence, the altar on which the environment is being sacrificed.

Middle-class people who ignore the other ravages of American corporations become aroused only when the cocktail party talk turns to the Utah canyon lands. The environment is a rarity among political issues: It provokes middle-class anger. Although ecology has been topical in America for only a decade, middle-class environmental awareness blossomed over a century ago in the first industrial nation, Great Britain. The British environmental movement has two main roots. In the late eighteenth century, the upper middle class discovered landscape as a source of aesthetic satisfaction. When tourism became stylish, the men and women riding through the English and Scottish countryside were horrified to discover the ugliness of industrialism. The English Lake District, perched precariously close to the major Lancashire factories, was preserved for the enjoyment of the Romantic poets and their aristocratic hangers-on. The second type of environmental concern stems from the London sewers of the early and mid-nineteenth century. When recurrent cholera epidemics were linked scientifically to the appalling sanitary conditions in working-class districts, middle-class reformers began a clean-up campaign. They realized that disease recognizes no boundaries of class: The cholera of the slums spread quickly to the townhouses of the rich.

KENNETH MURRAY

From these roots has grown the enormous tree of the environmental movement. The smokestack scrubber controversy, the toxic substances debate and the auto emissions squabble revolve around illnesses that, like London cholera, afflict the rich as well as the poor. Occupational diseases, such as liver cancer in the plastics industry, arouse less public indignation, and the environmentalists who shout about the outrage of strip mining rarely mention the extraordinary suffering of Appalachian workers in deep mines. The strip mining controversy, like the land use debate, the oil slick menace and the national parks changes, is an issue that upsets middle-class people in the same way that the desecration of the River Clyde upset the English tourist. These environmental problems are extracted from their socio-economic context and thereby lose their true shape and real significance.

To combat Ford's environmental policies, one must recognize that these programs are just one part of a larger plan and that the ultimate victims are not mountains and rivers but people. On the walls of the Federal Energy Administration are geological maps of Montana and Wyoming with markings for oil and coal deposits. On the walls of the Sierra Club are very different pictures of Montana and Wyoming: aquamarine skies, snowy mountains, streams so clear that fish seem about to leap right out of the posters. Despite their obvious differences, the FEA and Sierra Club portraits of the West have one thing in common. Neither depict any people. ●

WIDE WORLD

Scarring the land: Strip mining at Georges Fork, Va. (top) and near the Jim Bridges Power Plant in Wyoming (bottom).

Presidential speechwriting in thirteen easy lessons

By Paul Slansky

As a congressman from Grand Rapids, Jerry Ford was the most zealous trooper on the lecture circuit, devouring upwards of 200 rubber chickens a year. When he moved into the White House, it was expected that the increased work load would keep him home nights, but it hasn't turned out that way at all. President Gerald Ford has addressed over 150 groups this year. Although the White House now says that the President will be spending more time at his desk, the 1976 campaign is getting under way, and candidate Ford's need for sparkling prose can only increase. More speeches mean more speechwriters, right? Why not you? It's easy—just follow these simple guidelines and study the accompanying excerpts from recent Ford speeches. In no time you'll be challenging Bob Hartmann, Bob Goldwin and Bob Orben for their jobs.

1. Be sure to start the speech with "It is a great privilege and a very high honor to be here." Often you will find that "a very great privilege and a high honor" is an acceptable substitute, and you may occasionally get by with "It is a great privilege and a very high honor to have the honor of participating in this evening." Don't get carried away, however. An exercise in hyperbole—for example, "It is a very, very great privilege and a very high honor to have the opportunity of participating in this wonderful function"—is reserved for only the most special occasions (in this case, a Republican fund-raising luncheon in Maine).

2. Do not, repeat, DO NOT fail to include the following statement: "A government big enough to give us everything we want is a government big enough to take from us everything we have." These 22 words MUST appear verbatim in every speech, although the lead-in is flexible. (Some devices that have been used successfully include "don't they realize that . . . ," "just remember that. . . ," "never forget that. . . ," "we must be certain that we understand that. . . ," and "it is my deepest conviction that. . . .")

3. Wherever possible drop in the "Joseph's coat" allegory, as follows: "The beauty of Joseph's coat is in its many colors, and the beauty of these prayer breakfasts is the many faiths they bring together," or "The beauty of Joseph's coat is its many colors. The strength of America today is its diversity," or "The beauty of Joseph's coat is its many colors. The beauty of America is its many, many individuals, each a little different from the other," or . . . well, you get the idea.

4. Include a compulsive defense of the veto as a "positive action" (this has become an increasingly important point to make as the year has unfolded) and be sure to needlessly point out that it is a "constitutionally given authority." Do not be overly influenced, however, by the melodrama and repetition of this example: "Some people allege that a veto is a negative act . . . that you are against progress, that it is negative and, therefore, something awfully evil about it. First let me say that in the Constitution of the United States, there is authority given to the President to veto, so it is a constitutional right of the President. And our forefathers were so wise to give that veto authority constitutionally because every once in a while a Congress acts very irresponsibly, and a veto is a power given by the Constitution . . . ." Enough!

5. Include at least one rhapsodic reference to the locale of the speech. These comments should be general enough to fit comfortably in any speech given anywhere in the nation. Consider these: "New Hampshire is a great, great State with all its beauty, and it is an even greater State with all of the wonderful people." "I think you know every visit I have ever made to Minnesota has been memorable, and it is without exceptions." "There is a touch of Texas in all Americans . . . in Texas everything is possible." (Indeed!) This technique is easily adaptable to the global stage: "Young people are the prized possession of all people. We love young Polish people, as I am sure you love young American people."

6. Humor is an essential ingredient in a successful speech. One reliable bit is the "airport joke": "As we were getting off the plane at the county airport, a rather amazing thing happened. Somebody asked me how to get to the campus of the University of Notre Dame. What made it so amazing—it was Father Hesburgh." Football is another standby, preferably a reference to local college football. The President's continuing loyalty to the University of Michigan (arch-rival of Ohio State) is an inexhaustible source of material: "Many ancient peoples played a form of football just to keep warm in the winter. And it still works. I saw Woody Hayes after the Rose Bowl game—boy, was he steamed!" The real zinger, however, should always be reserved for a snide remark at the expense of Congress or the Democrats: "A bronco is something that kicks and bucks, twists and turns, and very seldom goes in one direction very long. We have one of those things here in Washington. It is called the Congress." Or "I said here in Wisconsin do you have any special treats—or tricks I should say. He said, 'Mr. President, only when the Democrats in the legislature work on the State budget.' " As a last resort, bear in mind that the merest mention of Earl Butz will automatically get a laugh. ("You could tell, as I watched it anyhow, that Notre Dame was feeling pretty confident. I heard later they brought in Earl Butz to give the blessing.")

7. Inadvertent humor is another factor that must be considered—one never knows where it will pop up or what embarrassing form it will take. The textbook example is former President Nixon's reference to Washington's Governor Dan Evans as "Governor Evidence"—the faux pas against which all others are judged. There have been some respectable efforts by the incumbent, though—a demand to "enforce the violations" of the Paris Peace Accords, a reference to Anwar Sadat as the president of Israel and the observation that "the athletic director of any college and the President of the United States . . . both have a certain lack of performance in our jobs."

The only thing a speechwriter can do to capitalize on these bloopers is to supply the President with an amusing way to recoup: "I told my wife Betty I knew this speech backwards and I am proving it."

8. The words "judgment," "guarantee" and "memento" should be liberally sprinkled throughout the text, as the President derives great pleasure from mispro-

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL GROSS

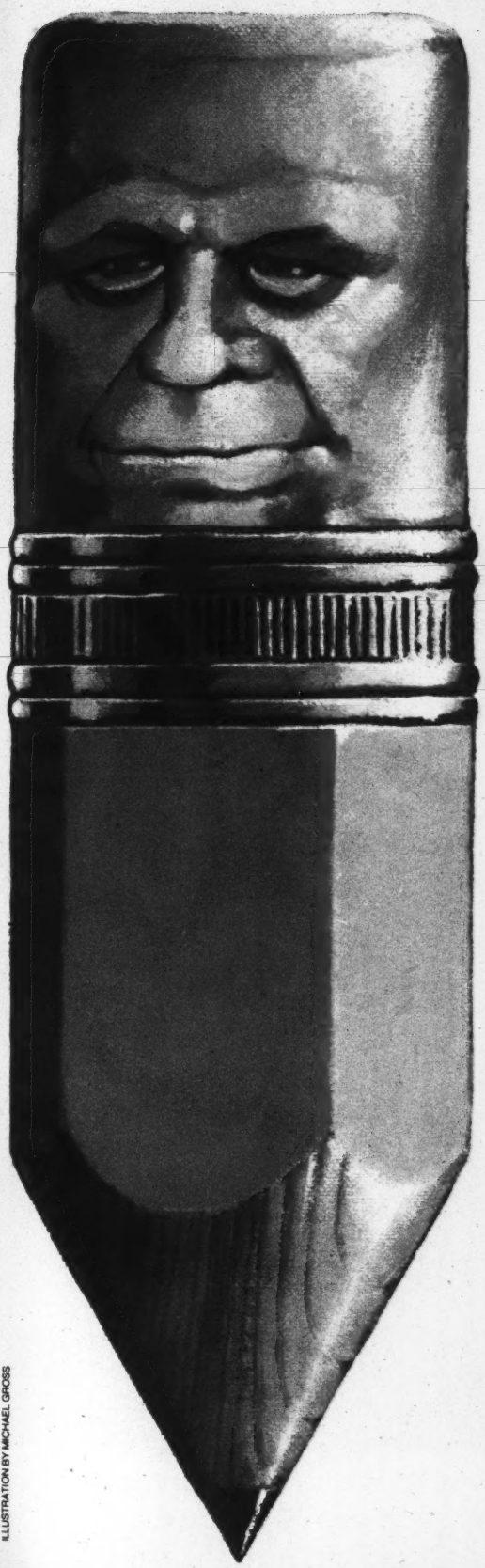


ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL GROSS

nouncing them: "judg-a-ment," "garr-on-tee," "mo-men-to."

9. When referring to a dollar amount in the trillions, always draw back in awe: "Some estimates have placed America's total investment requirement in the coming years at the astonishing figure of $4 trillion. Even the figure is imposing. It is four—followed by twelve zeros!"

10. The heart of the speech should not concern you overmuch, as nobody ever listens to it. It can be copied out of an economic textbook or a local telephone directory, provided that these notions are interspersed throughout: a) "quick fix" solutions cause long-term problems; b) the economy is coming around—slowly perhaps, but nonetheless coming around; c) the federal budget must be cut; d) defense spending has already been cut too much and must not be cut any further; and e) the Republican Party is not a rich man's party but, rather, is a party for all the people.

11. The importance of applause lines cannot be overemphasized. They should consist of high-sounding blather, and either take a stand that no one could conceivably argue with ("As long as I have anything to say about it, this country's symbol will never be an empty beer can in a river of garbage") or be so general that one would not know how to dispute them ("There is a new vitality growing among our people," or "Emerson once said, 'Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.' This is a time for greatness in our Nation, and especially for enthusiasm").

12. Make a point by belaboring it: "I don't think it is wise for me to speculate . . . for me to speculate at this stage, I think, is very unwise." "It is important that we make a special effort to make certain and to make positive. . . ." "I regret to say—and I say it with sadness. . . ." "We are going to have more employment. We are going to have less unemployment." And "We can avoid the need and necessity of a veto." Any course of action will seem all the more attractive if it eliminates not just the need but also the necessity of a veto.

13. Finally, a real insider's tip: If you are so minded, once in a long while you can slip in a nugget of actual wisdom, the real point of which will pass over the heads of both speaker and audience: "Neither the Republican Party nor any other party can repeatedly sell them a bad bill of goods. They won't buy it. They may be fooled once but they will learn . . . the American people won't buy political double-talk forever." ●

"Young people are the prized possession of all people. We love young Polish people, as I am sure you love young American people."
—Gerald Ford

ILLUSTRATION BY DICKRAN PALULIAN

fear of phoning

Norman Mailer once suggested that "totalitarianism is the interruption of mood." If so, the telephone, our nagging, necessary nemesis, may be the most powerful totalitarian tool of all

By William Kowinski

A sinister force is on the trail of the President's analyst—but who? The FBI's top agent and his KGB counterpart discover that it is neither of them. Then who on God's earth could have located the analyst in a phone booth in the wilderness, locked him in by remote control and nearly forklifted him away? Who has the means to bug every telephone in the world, even this lonely pay phone? James Coburn, Godfrey Cambridge and Severn Darden stare at one another in wonder; suddenly, a mutual light dawns. Of course: Who else possesses the requisite technological tentacles, as well as the perfect cover of benign invisibility? The phone company itself . . . TPC.

The President's Analyst was a Sixties cult film that created the dread TPC as a screwball metaphor for the vastness of corporate power. It posed a tantalizing question in stock black comedy fashion: Can the telephone company, which reaches into literally every corner of the earth, on which president and prole alike are distressingly dependent, establish itself as the ultimate technocratic dictatorship?

Nowadays the notion doesn't always seem so screwball; the metaphor may be turning into hard reality. Even the Seventies films show the telephone in a different, more threatening light: a symbol of missed communications in *Sunday, Bloody Sunday*, an instrument of disembodied terror in *Three Days of the Condor*. As we well know, our films always reflect our attitudes toward our institutions. And there is no institution in the world like the omnipresent, omnipotent Bell System to instill aggravation, frustration—and often plain dumb

fright — into a psychically battle-scarred populace.

If, as Norman Mailer wrote, "totalitarianism is the interruption of mood," then the telephone company is unquestionably the most powerful totalitarian force extant. The phone reaches into the privacy of the home and apartment with an undeniable insistence. It rings and it must be answered, be the caller breather, bill collector or just your workaday bore. You can always hang up, of course — but they can always ring back.

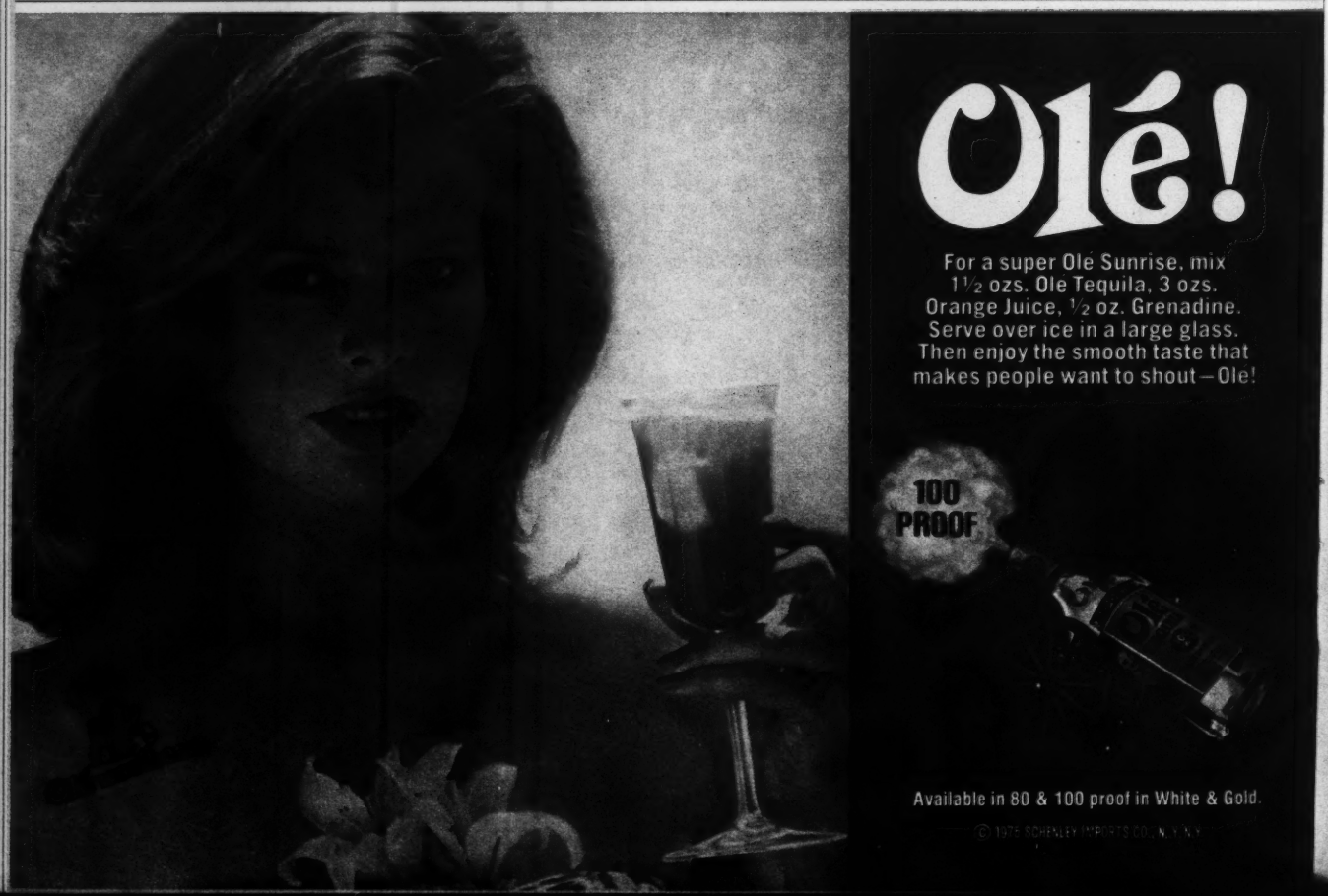
In a single day of phoning recently we spoke to a woman in Virginia who was being so severely harassed by her former husband and his friends that she was taping all incoming calls for evidence; a teacher in St. Paul, Minn., who had a visitor screen her calls so she wouldn't have to talk to an unnervingly persistent suitor; and a lab psychologist in Baltimore who was trying to cope with the dozen daily calls she was receiving from a man who insisted she see a shrink because she wouldn't go out with him anymore.

We tend to think in terms of the McLuhan age of television's strangling influence on our lives, but the tube doesn't hold an iridescent filament to the phone. Says Alvin Toffler, author of *Future Shock* (as well as a secret report on the Bell System): "The telephone is far more deeply wired into our lives than television. Our home, our communities, our love lives and friendship patterns are all profoundly affected by the telephone."

And how does the Bell System rule its billions of subjects? Like a crafty, goutish despot who for too many years has not deigned to walk among his people. A.T. & T. owns nearly all of the 116 million telephones in the U.S. that buzz with some 457 million calls a day. It is the world's largest private corporation, with assets of $67 billion, more than 1 million employees and profits last year of nearly $3 billion — which makes A.T. & T. bigger than IBM, General Electric and the Big Three automakers *put together.* That is just too big for the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, and the federal government has filed suit (which Bell Telephone vows to fight to the bitter end). A.T. & T. has already lost $15 million in damages for its putative discrimination against blacks and women employees. The current Southwestern and Southern Bell scandals involve allegations of illegal campaign contributions and wiretapping; a Southwestern official left a grim suicide note saying, "Watergate is a gnat compared to the Bell System." Now that CIA and FBI wiretaps are very much in the public consciousness, California Congressman Ron Dellums has called for a probe of possible phone company conspiracy. It's not an outrageous notion; earlier this year A.T. & T. officials admitted that between 1964 and 1970 the company had monitored as many as 33 million toll calls in six cities in an effort to track down your alleged black and blue box perpetrators. It is no discountable testimony to the universal loathing of the phone company that people who have thus beaten Bell out of toll calls are modern-day folk bandit-heroes.

Yes, A.T. & T. is big time, all right. It is doubtful that New York City could secure a loan of $100 million from the Saudi Arabian government, but A.T. & T. did. Such high finance, however, means as much as pork belly futures to the workaday citizen/caller; it is the phone company employee, that faceless, rachet-voiced creature exquisitely exemplified by comedienne Lily Tomlin's smarmy operator ("Is this the party to whom I am speaking?"), who has driven sane men and women to commit unspeakable acts of terror. In his novel *Something*

William Kowinski last reported for NEW TIMES *on the differences between night people and day people.*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Happened Joseph Heller refers to them as "those blankly elusive people who work in the business offices," and since a goodly portion of the population is threatened monthly with cancellation of service (and thus, for all practical purpose, cancellation of life line), we've all had to deal with them. The pages of the Manhattan directory could be filled with stories of Bell System atrocities, and here's a dandy representative: In Massachusetts the phone company mistakenly disconnected the phone of a pregnant woman whose infirm father had a history of heart attacks, admitted the error after prolonged argument, but still charged her for reconnection. In most states there's only the flimsiest (if any) legal recourse to Bell's madness, and no federal or state regulatory agency has yet shown enough nerve or sinew to regulate billing practices.

Hear the case of Toby Patrick, 30, a publicist for a Boston insurance agency. It is the perfect domestic Catch 22. Patrick awoke one morning to find his phone dead. Okay, his payment was slightly overdue. So he borrowed a neighbor's phone and called to find out why he hadn't received a disconnect notice. "Because your phone hasn't been disconnected," was the reply. "Fine," he said, and he called the service department. "There's nothing wrong with your phone," they said, "except that it's been disconnected." Patrick called the business office again. Yes, they finally said, his phone had indeed been disconnected since August 21. The date was September 7. "But my phone was working until this morning," Patrick told them. "Your phone has been disconnected since August 21," they repeated. "Good," Patrick replied, "then I can't be charged for all the long-distance calls I made on my phone while it was disconnected." "Of course you can," they promptly answered. "All the tolls for calls you made while your phone was disconnected were recorded, and you'll be billed for them."

The phone company then insisted that Patrick pay 1) the month he owed on the current bill, 2) a deposit of another two months' worth and 3) a reconnection fee based on the time that elapsed since August 21 when his phone was officially disconnected. Also, of course, the toll calls during that period. What did Patrick do? Like everyone else, he paid.

Such lunacy will endure as long as Bell's monopoly does. That is simply one of life's nuisances. There is the more serious question of the cumulative sociological impact of the phones on our lives. It is remarkable that while our government agencies and academic institutions have examined every bloody facet of our being, no one has tackled the subject of our most intimate machine. If it is true that the telephone has established itself as our dominant communications medium, it has never completely won our confidence. People still have certain misgivings about the trustworthiness of telephonic communication. Why? First, because phones are cold, distant, impersonal. When Muhammad Ali made one of his false-alarm retirement announcements after the Foreman fight in Zaire, promoter Don King refused to talk to him from New York until the two could meet in the same room. Said King, "I just can't talk to a man on the phone the way I can talk to him in person." All the elements of personal contact—visual, tactile, olfactory, as well as the language of the body—except the voice are missing in the telephone conversation. This tends to inhibit or distort communication.

"I can tell right away if the person I am talking to does a lot of business on the phone. It's an entirely different way of communicating"

Psychologists have, however, studied the differences between face-to-face and remote conversation. Doctors A. Mehrabian and S.R. Ferris concluded in the *Journal of Consulting Psychology* that while people use both visual and vocal clues to comprehend the meaning of a conversation, they consider visual clues twice as important. Other studies show that personal presence becomes more important as the conversation becomes more emotional; anyone who has ever experienced the horror of a romantic conflagration over the phone can attest to that. The missing visual element isn't the only problem. Bell labs ran their own study (a rare foray for them) comparing the preferences of Chicago businessmen and Bell's own executives in a number of communications situations, giving them the choice of telephone, face-to-face and their latest innovation (and most conspicuous test market failure), the Picturephone, complete with camera and small viewing screen. Face-to-face conversation won in every category.

Anxiety over the phone can lead to momentary personality changes. Some of the most engaging people have the most miserable telephone temperaments. Some overcompensate for personal shortcomings or simple phone phobia by becoming highly aggressive—who does not daily confront a demon of the wire? Jack Towb, 26, who works for a movie distributor in New York and thus lives on the phone, is acutely aware of this problem. "Sometimes I get overanxious, too aggressive," he says. "I have a sort of weird sense of humor and I'm afraid people misunderstand." Towb claims, though, that he likes the special nature of the telephone conversation; he's a pro. "I can tell right away if the person I'm talking to does a lot of business on the phone. It's an entirely different way of communicating." Significantly, business friends say Towb doesn't always have his phone manner under control, that from a quiet amateur student of art history in person he transmogrifies into a screamer and threatener over the wire.

On the other hand, some people are disturbed nearly to the point of withdrawal by the fact that they are *not* seen. Jerry Zuriff, a Wheaton College psychologist, believes that people's fear of phones stems from their insecurity about being recognized. He described an extraordinary technique developed by social therapists to cope with this fear. A heterosexual male patient, for example, will be asked to call a female therapist and ask for a date. The woman will be receptive the first time, but will grow resistant in subsequent conversations to give the reticent lad more of a challenge. She might initially say, "Oh, sure, I remember you from Tom's party. You were the handsome fellow who talked about Indonesian poetry." She will eventually graduate to the more disconcerting, "I'm sorry, but I don't remember you at all. Who are you?"

If the poor blighter can survive that without going down to the basement and blowing the roof of his head off with a 12-gauge, he is presumably on the road to recovery. His female counterpart may not fare as well. Conducting a pilot study at Boston University, psychologist Fay Crosby noticed that women were more bothered by conveying assigned messages telephonically (and less facile at it) than men. A Washington, D.C., environmentalist, Marie Lassler, who works a lot by phone, confesses, "Most of the time I'm aware of being tense and inhibited. Talk-

ing to strangers is the hardest. I don't know how they're really reacting. Anyway, I like to watch people when I talk to them." Christina Amortir, a 27-year-old administrative assistant, conducts nearly all her business by phone but avoids telephone conversations with men friends. "It's too hard. Things get confused too easily. It's just not worth it."

Further, it is incontestably easier to lie over the phone—and everyone knows it. Says Stewart Brand, of *Whole Earth Catalog* fame, "The original basis for believing somebody is that you could watch them put their hands on the Bible and swear. When you can't see them do that, even symbolically, you can't be sure. I'd say it's impossible to lie in person. Something someone can see will give you away. On the phone it's still difficult, but it is possible."

Some find the built-in potential for evasiveness an asset. Tom Reynolds is an office manager for a firm in southwestern Massachusetts that handles employment problems for large corporations. He is 26, has long hair and a mustache and does nearly all of his work by phone. "I talk to many personnel managers and even corporation presidents, all straight business types. I have to project a certain image to them over the phone—I have to be reassuring and competent. They have to have confidence in me. If they could see me, I doubt that they would trust me as much. They've probably been working three or four times longer than I have. But I can sound seasoned and mature on the phone, man . . . it can be as misleading as you want it to be." He laughs. "Of course, I may be wrong about *them*. Maybe they're all 26-year-old freaks who think they're fooling a straight exec with just a touch of grey."

Still, it is generally disquieting to wonder if goodwill is genuine, if agreements are being made in good faith and even if confidences are being respected. Anyone can fall prey to the trick Hollywood mogul Harry Cohn used to pull—playing conversations over loudspeakers to a roomful of people. Scant wonder that the *New York Evening Telegram* could observe back in 1904 that, "Phony implies that a thing so qualified has no more substance than a telephone conversation with a suppositious friend."

Fear and suspicion of the phone are not at all new phenomena. Alexander Graham Bell knew something about these matters. In the late 19th century many people viewed talking on the phone as the Devil's work. "The effect is weird and almost supernatural," wrote the *New York Herald*. The *Providence Press* was even more ominous: "It is hard to resist the notion that the powers of darkness are somehow in league with it." That Bell had actually worked on the phone in Salem, Mass., and had used a dead man's ear in his experiments did not serve to quell fears of demonic alliance. Bell set out to show that Satan or no Satan, his instrument worked. A trained elocutionist, Bell gave theatrical demonstrations replete with elaborate proofs that his phone conversations weren't previously rehearsed, that there was nothing up his sleeve or in his throat. If audiences weren't immediately prepared to believe, they at least came to enjoy a whacking good show. Bell provided just that—by standing 16 Yale professors on line, hand in hand, and somehow sending his voice through their bodies; by having a band in Boston play the *Star Spangled Banner* through the telephone to an audience in Providence. Such grandstand techniques became a staple in the traditional Bell pitch familiar by now to everyone who has ever seen one of their films—which means everyone under 70 who has attended an American public school.

"Phony implies that a thing so qualified has no more substance than a telephone conversation with a suppositious friend"

The telephone became part of a romantic nation's treasure trove of folklore. There was Ingrid Bergman nuzzling Cary Grant as he dawdled on the phone in *Notorious* and Groucho Marx simulating long-distance confusion to double-talk a villain into submission in *A Day at the Races* and Glenn Miller and his band belting out the immortal "Pennsylvania 6-5000." But whatever America's mythmakers could do for Bell, Bell could do better. Hard dollars (right off the top of your phone bill) go into Bell's soft sell. Our TV screens, and hence our national consciousness, are saturated with images of Kindly Ma Bell electronically transporting gurgling grandchildren over the river and through the woods to Grandma's house on Christmas Day or reuniting those puckish schoolyard playmates ("we perpetrated a lot of craziness together"), Pete and Repeat. Not to mention all those lovely, multicolored films showing us that the human nervous system is like . . . a telephone system! What all the Bell footage is also showing, if we'll bother to notice, is that Bell has virtually monopolized not only the phone industry but also information *about* the phone industry. *Media*, a textbook analysis of mass communications, puts the case thusly: "How much do you know about, say, the Bell Telephone system? And where did you learn what you know? You learned a little of it from personal experience. You learned a great deal more from those charming and impressive A.T. & T. ads. And you learned by far the most from the efforts of the Bell PR department."

We don't need the ads to tell us of our dependence on the telephone; our leaders have amply demonstrated that for us. After all, instant communication means instant acquisition of information, instant application of power. When Lyndon Johnson was Senate majority leader he pioneered the now pedestrian field of the car phone as status symbol. President Johnson was so attached to the phone that he created "executive override," a system that permitted him to talk to whomever he wanted whether or not they were already talking to someone else. In times of stress President Nixon often closeted himself with only a telephone; he made 51 phone calls between 9:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. the night following the Kent State massacre. His eight calls to Henry Kissinger that night convinced Kissinger that Nixon was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. New York Mayor Abe Beame rarely consults with his aides in person and insists that they wear belt beepers so that they can be summoned to the nearest phone whenever he wants them. During the October default scare, Beame panicked and twice called President Ford in the middle of the night. The President was not even awakened.

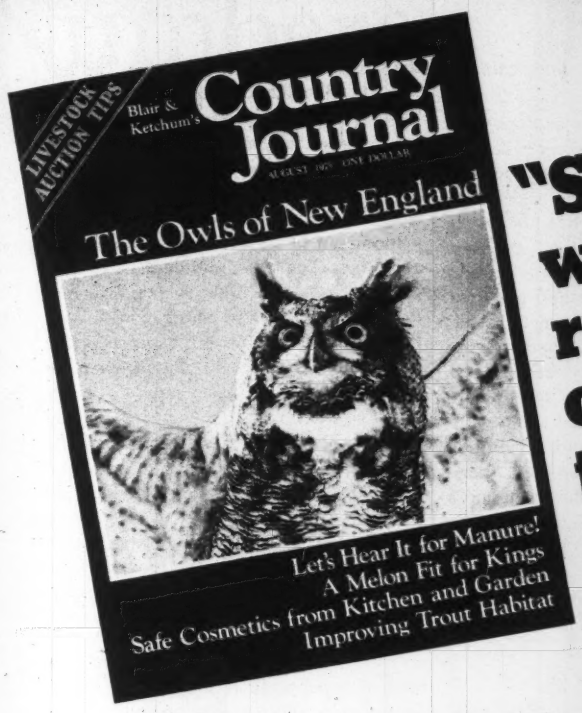
On the other hand, President Ford has had his own problems with telephone communications. Witness the following conversation with President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, reprinted in the *New York Times:*

"Ford: President Sadat?

Sadat: Hello. This is President Sadat. . . .

Ford: . . . President Sadat, I wanted to call you and congratulate you on the great role that you played in the negotiations that have culminated in this agreement.

Sadat: Hello? . . .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Here are some articles planned for future issues: Farmers' Markets ☐ Whitewashing ☐ House Security in the Country ☐ Ice Fishing ☐ Hazards of Road Salt ☐ Building an Octagonal Barn ☐ Learning Night Sounds ☐ The Stock Pot on Your Stove ☐ Cross-Country Skiing with Small Children ☐ Making Home Brew ☐ How to Buy a Used Tractor ☐ Growing Superior Tomatoes ☐ Optics for Birders.

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—Allyn Winslow, Bedford, Massachusetts

"Out of almost twenty magazine subscriptions, I am most pleased when I see Country Journal in the mailbox." —Mrs. Brian Klossner, Turin, N.Y.

"Country Journal is intelligent, reflective, peaceful and wise. All the real country virtues."
—Peter Geer, New York City

"I think your magazine is the best magazine printed."
—Ann Lesser, North Attleboro, Massachusetts

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Some are just lovers of the country. "Your Journal should be read throughout our country," wrote Hans Rosenhaupt from Princeton, N.J., "wherever people love the land and its history."

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*And if you find that Country Journal isn't what we led you to believe, **we will refund the full amount** of your subscription, provided you write to us within two weeks of getting your first copy. Or if you take the "bill me later" option, you can simply write "cancel" on the invoice and return it promptly. A no-risk proposition.*

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Ford: I know that you and I recognize that stagnation and stalemate in the Middle East would have been potentially disastrous, and your leadership in working with Secretary Kissinger and with the Israelis, all of us are most grateful for. And as we continue to work together, personally, as well as Government to Government—

Sadat: Hello? . . .

Ford: I can assure you, Mr. President, we are going to keep the momentum going in the peace process. We will not tolerate stagnation or stalemate.

Sadat: I should like to add another point, Mr. President. . . . I think I would like to emphasize the importance of (inaudible).

Ford: I, unfortunately, could not hear as well as I would like the last comments you made. . . ."

With increasing phone dependence has come the decline of other forms of communication, especially that rare old friend, the personal letter. According to the U.S. Postal Service, 85 percent of the year's mail is business correspondence and advertisements. Christmas cards comprise most of the remaining 15 percent. When Andrew Malcolm of the *New York Times* surveyed reaction to the threat of a postal strike last summer, he found that few people particularly cared. Typical was a San Francisco woman's response: "Who cares about the mail? All you get is junk. It's the phone company that's important." Another casualty is the friendly personal visit. The widespread loss of phone service in Manhattan last spring briefly revived the practice, but, as one woman complained, "I had to clean my apartment too often." Producer Hillard Elkins summed up this thoroughly modern malaise: "Meeting someone today is merely a matter of protocol."

A few studies indicate at least the possibility that the telephone may be altering our language patterns. The average telephone conversation in the United States lasts just 150 seconds, scarcely time for carving the quintessential elegant phrase. An Oxford University study showed that students used shorter sentences to communicate through an intercom than they used in person. If you find this unnerving, others have found it so before you—and done something about it. They are doing without. That's right, without. Not just eccentrics such as screenwriter Dalton Trumbo, who reinforced his unemployability during the blacklist era by discarding his phone, or the alternate lifestylers in New Hampshire who commune with the seasons and live by the calendars on their camper dashboards.

No, there are people such as Californian Laurel Donner, now a resident of Cambridge, Mass., who decided her life was too "outer-directed" and decided to rectify that by eliminating her phone. "It was too much of a temptation," she says. "When I was feeling lonely it was just too easy to pick up the phone and get right back into the patterns I'm trying to break. It was important for me to experience my solitude, to learn what my feelings are. The telephone only helps me delude myself." Others experienced their withdrawal by a familiar accident. Bobby Picabia, a young Washington, D.C., playwright, got one of the phone company's patented early morning phone calls. "They gave me till high noon to pay," he says. "I told them what to do with their phone system and went back to sleep." He then lived—actually *survived*—without a phone for a full year. "At first I thought I had some rights—that nobody, not even the phone company, could move against me like that. I was wrong. But I still couldn't let them have the satisfaction. I was working on a play anyway and needed the quiet, so I tried it without a phone and watched what happened."

"Who cares about mail? All you get is junk. It's the telephone company that's important"

A curious result was that friends took his action as a personal affront. "When I'd run into them," Picabia says, "they'd get upset because they couldn't call me. I'd say, 'But I'm here, right *now*.' But it was like we couldn't meet unless it was pre-arranged by phone. It really irks me, too. I have to wonder about people who are your friends only if it doesn't take any effort."

Others try to reach a reasonable compromise. Take Marian Bell, a nurse in a large urban hospital. Plainly, her duties at work make it necessary for her to carry a beeper when she's not on her floor. Every time she answers the phone it is because someone needs her or something is wrong with one of her patients. But at home she leaves the phone off the hook or simply doesn't answer it unless she's expecting a call. "If I win the lottery, they'll call back," she says. "And for the rest of us, who needs the hassle?"

Practically all of us, Marian; that's why that long, black cord is wrapped as securely around our necks as a stout leash on a craven dog. But now at least a modicum of respite from the hassle is available. The latest middle-class must is the answering machine; systems ranging in price from $60 to $600 can do anything from simply playing a prerecorded intro and taking a 30-second message from the caller (the most popular machine) to retrieving messages from any phone in the world. Touches of personal style are beginning to creep into the machines. When you call Scott MacDonough of Columbia Pictures at his home in New York City, you're liable to hear a snip of repartee between George Burns and Gracie Allen followed by a voice that says, "Hi—I'm Otis, Scott's answering machine. Scott isn't here now. . . ."

Of all the tyrannies mankind has had to face, none is more stable—and hence as deadly—as the tyranny of the bureaucracy. It is time that serious sociologists begin to analyze just what contribution the phone company makes to the new rule by computer specialist and keypunch operator. Meanwhile, all governments—not just the U.S.—must devise means to regulate the phone companies fairly and effectively; someday it may be too late. At home the FCC must head off A.T. &T. and other communications conglomerates that are already cornering the markets in cable television and communications satellites. As former FCC Commissioner Nicholas Johnson asked, "Should we permit the entire universe to be divided up, with Comsat taking the heavens and A.T.&T. the earth?"

Be not alarmed at the global incandescence of A.T.&T.'s glow. After all, progress is an important product here, too. Our communications giants may someday insure that you will never have to be alone, that you will never have to leave your home or encounter another human being save your mate and offspring in the flesh: All social functions may be conducted by remote control. Conceivably, in the not too distant future, the Bell System will even perfect an entire communications system small enough to be implanted in your brain. Think of it; fiery bolts of communications zapping straight into your skull.

What's that? All this progress in communications is giving you the heebie jeebies? Your soul cries out for the reassurance of a simple human voice? Try Dial-A-Prayer. . . . ●

Numbers

A majikal new album from Cat Stevens

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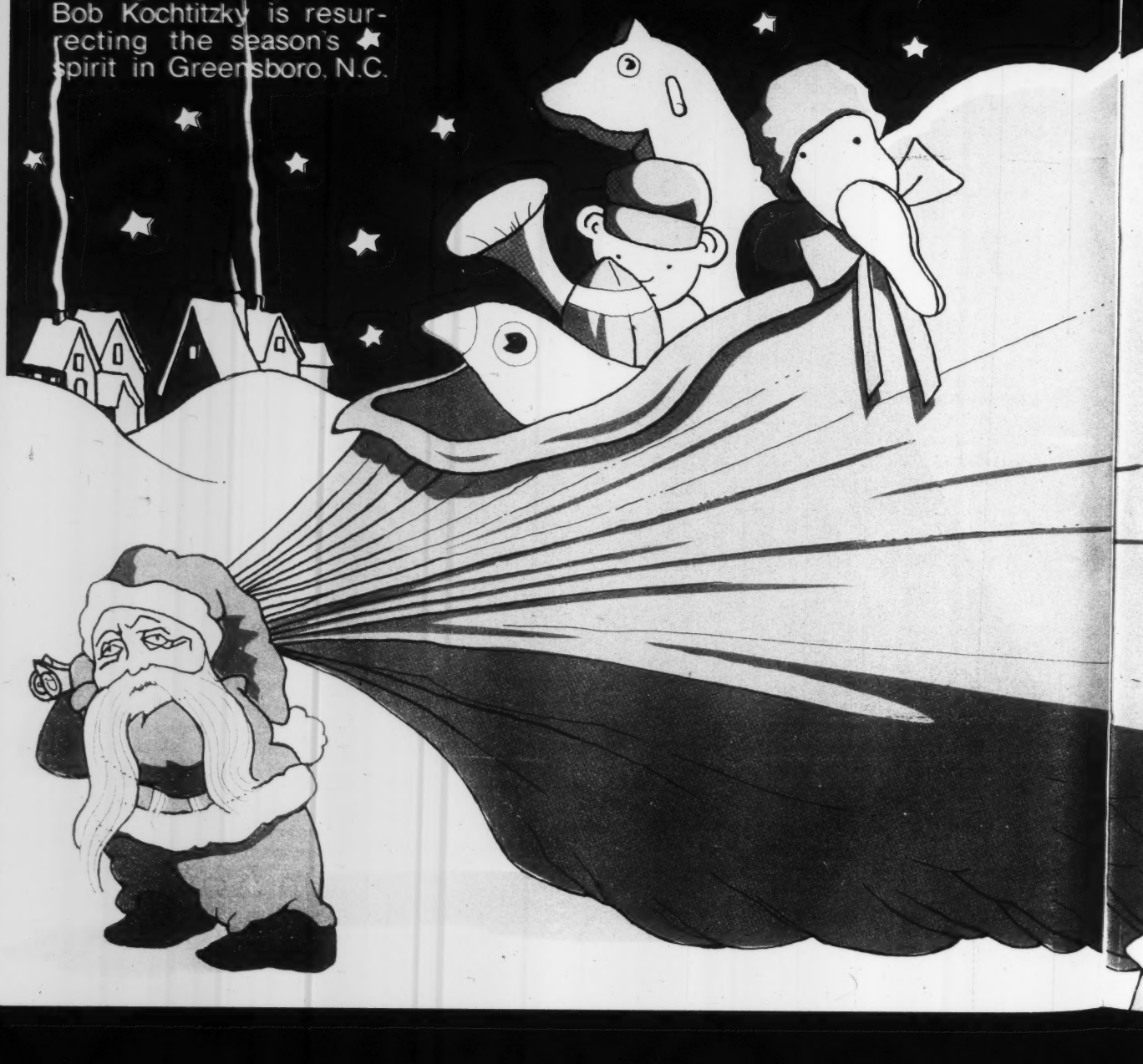
A CURE FOR TINSELITIS

By
Sonny Kleinfield

At last, there is an alternative to Christmas crass—a balding crusader named Bob Kochtitzky is resurrecting the season's spirit in Greensboro, N.C.

Christmas is come, but how has it come? It once came like this: Snow crunches underfoot, and crude but magical decorations and wreaths hang in windows. There is the rich, delectable smudge of pine sap on hands. Sleighing scenes. A sprig of holly. A match put to a candle. Stockings. The yule log. The festive aroma of chestnuts. Caroling by real people, real voices. A fine spontaneity sparking the giving and receiving of gifts. Children expected to present their parents with something fashioned by their own hands, or able to recite a poem or tap out a new piano solo. The parents are to know nothing of this, though they probably have heard the dismal practicing for weeks. . . . One envisions Pickwickians, glasses raised in toast.

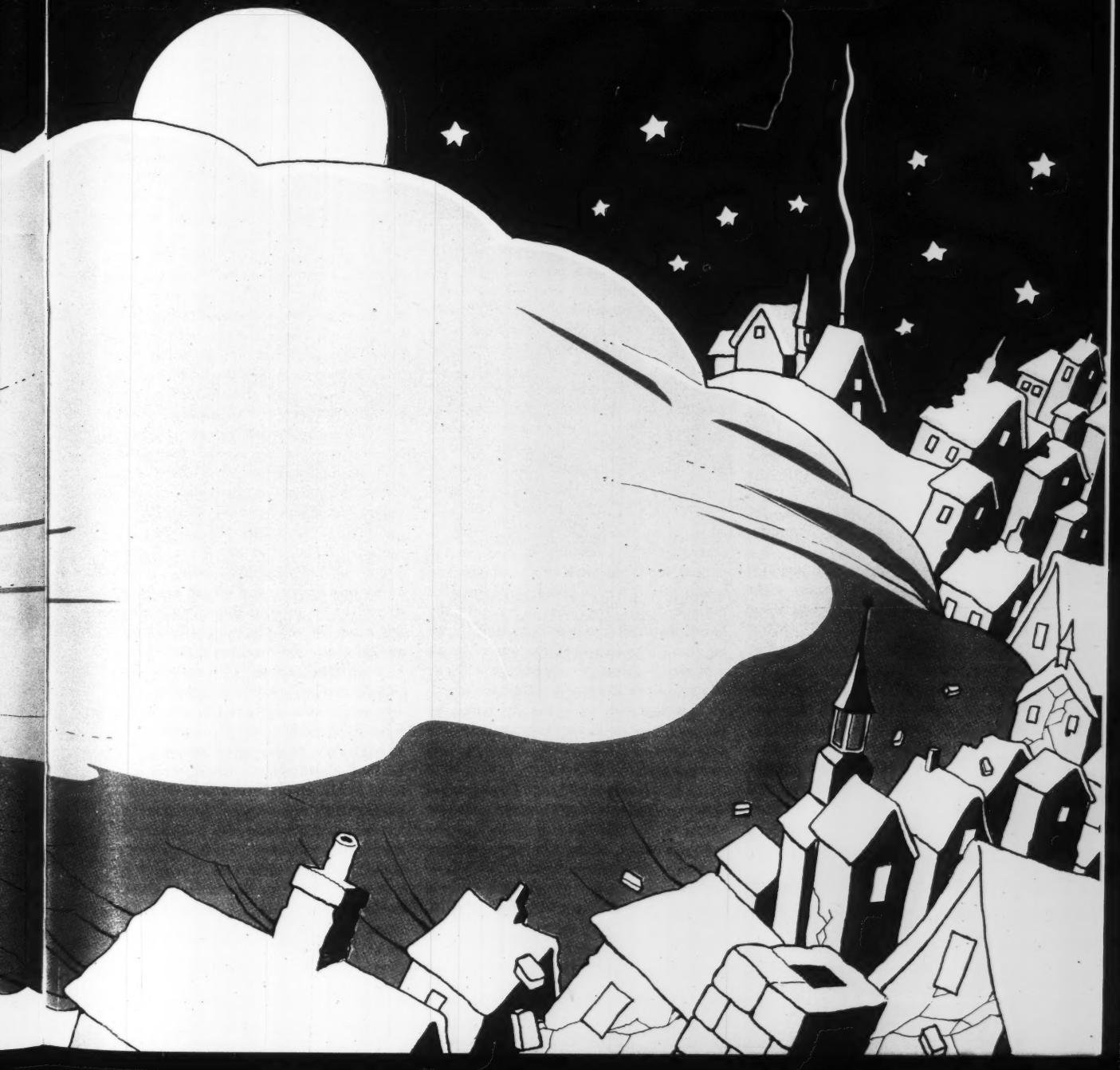
So much for the way it was. Today, the hope is merely to survive the thing. It is almost a menace. Each year, getting ready is more and more an exercise in survival—surviving the stores, surviving the prices and ill temper, surviving, most of all, the seasonal assault of commercial ugliness. The streets are plugged solidly with motor traffic. Loudspeakers blast forth Christmas tunes (invariably with static), giving people migraines. Huge municipal Christmas trees, ablaze with huge globular lights, are flanked by huge



plaster effigies of Wise Men, camels, gnomes, reindeer. The modern Christmas is carried on by all sorts of servomechanisms, electronics and power assists. American ingenuity gone berserk. Frantic advertising campaigns are being carried on by department stores anxious to clear their inventories. They are clearing. Presents pile up in closets, in corners, on stoves, in bathtubs (all charged, of course). Lopsided, overpriced Christmas trees are selling like crazy. Christmas morning arrives, and we are too dead to unwrap the mob of gifts that confronts us. What matter—the same things came last year. Everybody is broke.

It is enough to turn Bob Kochtitzky's stomach. As Americans shell out more than $10 billion on Christmas gifts and decorations this year—cashmere sweaters, Pucci loafers, Norell perfume, toy hydrogen bombs—Bob Kochtitzky will meanwhile blow a few bucks to build his son and daughter a tree house. He will spend nothing to do some chores for his wife. His Christmas will be a spontaneous occasion, simple, cheap, the gifts coming from the heart rather than the store shelves. "In most people's heads, Christmas means one thing, to spend money like mad," Kochtitzky says. "Buy lunatic things nobody wants or needs, but go out and buy them. Buy. Buy. Buy. The Christmas ideal—peace on earth and goodwill toward all men—is not a reality today. Each year, people believe the dream may come true, but it doesn't. We've got to save Christmas from the money changers. As it is, Christmas is the big lie."

Kochtitzky is 47, a balding, bearded, bespectacled man. For the last ten years he has steadfastly refused to contribute to the tremendous disbursement of currency during Christmas. For the last two and a half years, he has been stirring up some dust in a crusade to get everyone else in the country to save their bucks.



He runs a nonprofit organization out of a signless storefront in Greensboro, N.C., called Alternatives, through which he tries to deny the law of commercialism. The overriding message of what he promotes as an alternate Christmas is not to abandon gift-giving, especially since the American public is rather inclined by its nature toward giving presents, but to spend less on gifts, to give more practical gifts and to give gifts that will benefit people in greater need than you are. Commercial interests, he believes, have perverted the idea of Christmas, have taken Santa off the rooftop and put him behind the fine jewelry counter. He would prefer to see more of an emphasis on civility. There has been a decline in manners in a declining age. "Give favors, give your time, dip a candle, whittle a whistle," he says. "It's not necessary to give Steuben glass."

Although Alternatives originally surfaced as a venture to spread the bad word about Christmas, Kochtitzky has come to confront other nasty questions, so that he now promulgates an alternate Easter, alternate Hanukkah, alternate Thanksgiving, alternate birthday, alternate wedding, alternate Valentine's Day, alternate graduation, alternate Halloween, alternate Passover, alternate funeral. Kochtitzky is pushing an alternate life. People, he feels, should take care of their needs in the cheapest and most agreeable fashion, being as frugal as possible with natural resources. Christmas, the greatest commercial feast of all, is his particular obsession. "If we start with Christmas and persuade people to stop throwing money away, then we can enlarge the idea to life in general," he says. "The idea is to simplify. Simplify. Simplify. Simplify."

Kochtitzky's principal promotional weapon is his *Alternate Celebrations Catalogue*. The third and latest edition, recently published (202 pages, $3.50), is an impressive work that at first blush resembles a children's coloring book. It opens with a stern editorial, decrying "the pervasive power of corporations to profit from celebrations," worrying over "the cunning falsehood that a certain product can produce happiness, good looks, friends or security," pledging to "neutralize a multimillion dollar advertising adversary dedicated to the slick art of consumer seduction."

The catalog is strong on what is called an alternate gift certificate, a nonconsumptive and un-ostentatious way to give presents, the antithesis of the Saks Fifth Avenue certificate. Available in any denomination, it must be redeemed through one of the dozens of human welfare groups advertised in the catalog. You pay your money and you get some sort of handmade object or the simple satisfaction that you've helped a less fortunate person. Last Christmas, a total beneficence of $18,000 in certificate money rolled in.

In fine detail the catalog goes on to spell out appropriate ways of protesting the modern celebration of our holidays, mentioning, among others, the alternate funeral (be cremated; donate your organs to medicine), the alternate Halloween (when kids knock on your door, give them nothing; explain that the money you would have squandered on their Milky Ways is being sent to a hunger project), the alternate Valentine's Day (forward money to a prison reform movement; the holiday originated after a Roman prisoner named Valentine wrote a farewell note to the jailer's daughter and signed it "Your Valentine").

"In most people's heads, Christmas means one thing," says Kochtitzky—"spending money like mad"

A large portion of the catalog is crammed with consumer articles, giving people the word on how to emulate the frugal life. Space is given to recipes for organic dishes, toys that are potentially harmful to children, recommended reading lists ("The Indian Herbalogy of North America," "How To Meditate," "Save Money, Save Energy"), gifts and decorations that can be made by hand, the broodings of an ex-advertising man, the broodings of an ex-wedding photographer.

A prodigious listing of groups that Alternatives feels represent legitimate enterprises for contributions fills out the catalog. Many of the ads for the groups are done up with photographs of people wearing expressions of pain. They could use some money, especially during Christmas, when self-pity seems to expand like bubble gum. The primary mission of this listing is to encourage people to divert their gift money to one of these organizations rather than to department stores. The craft groups included are made up of workers whose income typically runs from $200 to $3,000, groups such as Washita Valley Crafts, Shelburne Spinners, Operation Shoestring, Bread for the World, Heifer Project International, Crop, Bowery Residents Committee. By Alternatives' reckoning, more than $1 million last year was diverted to these groups as a consequence of the catalog. A lot of money; Alternatives wants lots more.

The idea of an alternate Christmas is not a novelty that suddenly sprang full-blown from Bob Kochtitzky's head one day as he lit a yule log. Repulsion against the big commercial interests is long-standing and widespread. However, Kochtitzky views himself as a unique bridge who has brought together adherents of the concept into something of a cohesive movement. Its actual roots are unclear. Some people, no doubt, have been disgusted at buying useless gifts at department stores ever since department stores started selling useless gifts. Church groups, for some years, have spoken out with vigor against the crass commercialism of the holiday. "Would Christ shop in Neiman-Marcus?" Frustrated by the horrible events of the Vietnam war, many people during the war period began funneling their gift money to needy Vietnamese causes rather than lavishing it on relatives. Ecology groups have been pushing inexpensive ecological Christmas gifts. They suggest, for instance, a gift of a family hike in the woods. See nature. No cost, except the expense of getting to the woods. Alternate Christmas is a tough sell in a society dependent on buying, but it is selling. By what he regards as a conservative guess, Bob Kochtitzky figures nearly 100,000 Americans today are united by this activity and would not be expected to be seen in Bloomingdale's on the hunt for self-cleaning toe warmers and precision mushroom scales.

Kochtitzky and his catalog have already inspired people to cook up varying ways of beating back the commercial beast. One could always do what Landers and Paula Sevier do. Last year, the Seviers and three other well-to-do families in Birmingham, Ala., collectively abandoned the notion of Spending Consciousness. Their complaint: "There was deep unrest among us, we were getting no feeling out of Christmas," says Paula Sevier. "It became a hassle each year trying to figure out things to give each other when there was no need. We wanted to make Christmas more meaningful." Landers Sevier is a general manager at Ebsco Industries. His family alone was dispens-

This story was researched by Paula Krongard. To obtain a copy of the catalog, write to: Alternatives, Box 20626, Greensboro, North Carolina 27420.

ing more than $1,000 on Christmas presents and thinking nothing of it. Peace on earth, goodwill toward all men—well, that was somebody else's worry.

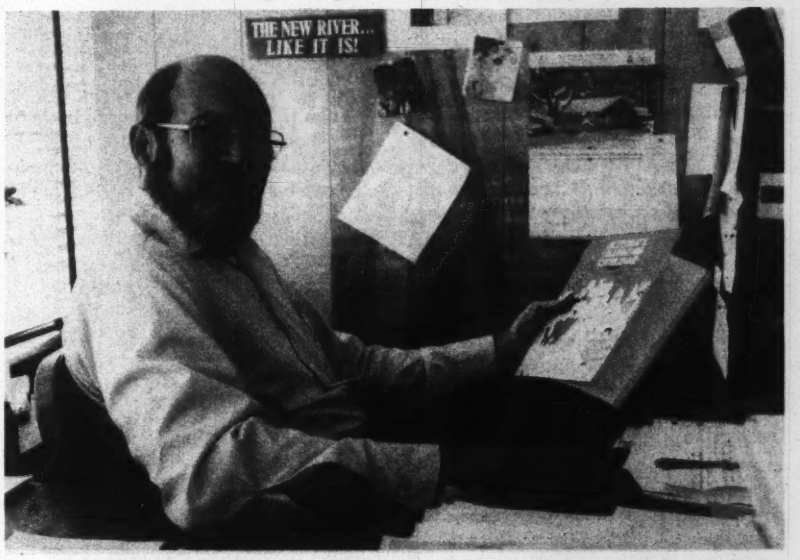
Last Christmas, the four families, 20 people in all, decided to pool their gift money. They then directed the funds toward worthy enterprises: the family of a policeman gunned down on duty, a defense fund for a young prisoner, a project supporting black communities in Birmingham, a missionary project in Peru. The children of the families then baled together toys that weren't getting much use and carted them over to a poor family of a mother and 14 children.

"We'll do something along the same lines this year," Paula Sevier says. "I can't ever stand to think of Christmas anymore as I used to remember it. We used to wake up and have Santa Claus here. Then go to grandmother's and have Santa Claus there. Then go to great grandmother's and have Santa Claus there. There was all this stuff. Everywhere you looked, there was all this stuff. I know we're never going to do that kind of garbage anymore."

Bob and Marie Grosso of McLean, Va., will spend the closest they can to nothing at all on Christmas—a bit of a change from blowing everything they possibly could. Mrs. Grosso says, "I very much believe in moving away from the need to consume and the concept of created need. The giving of gifts is a true expression of caring about another person only if the gift is truly something of the giver."

The Grossos, who have five children, warmed to the idea of an alternate Christmas after getting hold of the *Alternate Celebrations Catalogue* last year. Their new approach is to give gifts of time. This Christmas, they intend to offer each of their children a day. That day—any day chosen—can be used for whatever purpose with whomever the child decides. "We, in effect, are telling the children that we're giving ourselves for Christmas," explains Mrs. Grosso. Bob will give his wife "more consideration." Marie is thinking of giving her husband the promise that she will have nothing to do on Sunday nights for a year except be with him. Not bad ideas, however ironic. Once, consideration and shared time were taken for granted. We have got to the point where this is something novel, unusual. One has to give these things as gifts.

Other projects: The First Congregational Church in Long Beach, Calif., has erected an eight-feet-tall Christmas card, conceivably the world's biggest Christmas card. Half the mail moved in America is greeting cards, and the church thinks this a waste. Greeting cards are soon in the trash anyway. The church has asked its members to scribble in their season's greetings on the supercard and to contribute their usual card and postage expense to a collection box, which will help support a camp for church children that aids work projects in a poor Mexican-American community. Along similar lines, the Sierra Club in San Francisco will rent a two-year-old redwood tree for $10. A two-year-old redwood is about five feet tall. Once the season ends, you must return your growing Christmas tree to a volunteer who will then plant it in a damaged forest.



Kochtitzky: His Christmas tree is a house plant, his present to his kids a tree house.

Bob Kochtitzky grew up in a middle-class family in Mississippi. His father owned a wholesale building materials business. and his family had everything it needed, plus, like any sane middle-class family, some things they didn't need. "The pattern established in our family was that celebrations were very present-oriented," Kochtitzky says. "I didn't really have an answer for some time, but the question started to form in my head whether the gifts were really necessary, or were they just part of a ritual, something automatic, like taking a shower when you're dirty." Kochtitzky received the usual lot of Christmas gifts. He got suede jackets, new suits, toy trains, sweaters galore. Once he got a flashlight-like contraption, bristles blooming out of one end, that was supposed to suck lint off clothes like mad. It didn't suck lint at all, just made a lot of noise. "It was a typical useless Christmas gift," he says.

Kochtitzky ran a paint store for some years, then abruptly decided that although people needed paint all right and needed someone to sell it to them, he just wasn't that someone. He enrolled in ministry school at Southern Methodist University, and there he started thinking about Christmas. "I began to find myself becoming very angry at Christmas time," he recalls. "I felt trapped with a Christmas card list of 75 names. I would go dashing through department stores trying to find just the right gifts for people I didn't think needed anything to begin with. I even remember buying things and then actually seeing them back on the shelves the day after Christmas. What a joke! The combination of all this in a world of poverty, hunger, racism, oppression and need just made me decide ten years ago to say quits. I didn't say quits to the idea of Christmas, I said quits to commercialism."

Kochtitzky was not stupid. He knew he could not buy a better world with the $100 or so he might exhaust on Christmas gifts. Better worlds, when they go, go for more than that. But he figured he could reduce the price some by turning over his gift money to groups that were moving the world in the right direction. For several years he mailed contributions to various charitable organizations in the names of relatives and friends in place of gifts. The recipients of his bursts of generosity made no immediate response, but it was clear that they thought Kochtitzky was slightly out of plumb.

Finished with ministry school, though not a minister, Kochtitzky tried his hand at a volunteer occupation organization in Washington, D.C., through which he matched up volunteer help with

appropriate agencies that needed manpower. After that, he set up a Third World workshop, which aimed at educating people to take action to produce more justice in the world. Before long, Kochtitzky got married, and his wife shared his thoughts on Christmas and the simple life. They had an alternate wedding. They authored their own service, typed out invitations rather than buy store-sold ones and refused to register with department stores, complicating the efforts of gift-givers. What nuts! the stores figured. Don't want any gifts.

As a result, Kochtitzky set up Alternatives. He raised $1,500 from friends and got to work on his first project: the *Alternate Christmas Catalogue.* He had 10,000 copies printed up in the spring of 1973. Each copy was 59 pages long and went for a dollar. The whole lot was snapped up by June. Kochtitzky wished he had charged more. Another 9,000 were gone before Christmas arrived. The second edition, issued last year at 128 pages and a price of $2.50, sold 46,000 copies. Kochtitzky found out that, after seeing the catalog, people often felt the traditional gift-giving impulse begin to melt away, to be replaced by talk of goodwill. He was on to something, all right, and he decided to take advantage of his success by pushing for a re-evaluation of lifestyles in general.

In reducing Christmas to elemental ideals, Kochtitzky feels strongly that Christmas trees and the store-bought ornaments that cover them are distasteful frivolities that should be done without. He wonders at the madness of an entire business built upon the premise of cutting down armies of trees (30 million a year), the trees being shipped out to stores and street corners and then being sold at tidy profits to consumers, who for their part proceed to blizzard them with costly decorations and energy-wasting lights and then to dump them in the trash, all over a three-week period. Kochtitzky's Christmas tree: a Schefflera, a very large house plant — grown to a height of seven or eight feet. It can hold decorations (handmade, of course) as well as the best pine. It does not have to be thrown away every year. It does not leave a gap in any forest.

Equally unsettling to Kochtitzky and his disciples is the inordinate number of gifts offered for sale that baffle one's best attempts to conceive of a possible donor or recipient. Christmases past have seen such treasures as clocks that are certified not to keep time. There is one that proceeds whirligig fashion by swinging a ball on the end of a string against a pair of uprights, forward and then backward, in such a way that "it just won't keep accurate time." It costs $50, which is a lot of money to spend to not know what time it is. Another wall clock "runs unreliably on water." Kochtitzky says, "I've seen advertised gifts such as a toilet seat that plays the Ohio State fight song when you raise it. Exactly what everyone needs. Can you imagine your boss sitting down on it?"

In pursuing his crusade, Bob Kochtitzky works long, weary hours with no apparent letup, sharing his authority with as few as four and as many as eight helpers (average salary: $5,000, based on need). He is gratified that last year Alternatives raised a sum total of $93,400 — money accumulated from the sale of catalogs, donations and grants. Kochtitzky, who prides himself on his carefulness with dollars, draws a salary of $1,100 a month to support his family of four. He used to collect $1,000, but a few months ago inflation was battering him so hard that he gave himself a raise. He lives with no ostentation at all. Out of his income, Kochtitzky and his family continue to contribute whatever money they can to the varied groups he advocates.

Much of Kochtitzky's time is spent talking into a phone receiver or batting out a letter, pitching his ideology to whoever will lend an ear. On the phone, when he is worked up about his cause, his vitality, devotion and hard-mindedness are plain, but Kochtitzky's zeal is genuine and inoffensive — linked as it is to an obsessive belief in spending money simply and wisely. Anyway, ears are being lent. "I know we're a David against a Goliath," he says, "and I know all we've got are three stones. But we're rather pleased with the ripples we've made so far. We're prepared to slay Goliath slowly."

There is some question about how far the phenomenon of alternate Christmas can go. Involved is a fundamental change in the way people go about their lives. The more ambitious goal of Bob Kochtitzky is to inspire as many as half a million ordinary families to divert $100 or so a year into worthy causes, a total of $50 million. His aspiration is that the sheer number of individuals who then stage alternate Christmases will become an increasing irritant to commercial interests. "The fact of the matter is Christmas was conceived to celebrate the birth of Christ," he says. "No one seems to remember anymore that Jesus was a simple man. He had one pair of sandals, one robe and he didn't think about tomorrow." ●

Bah, humbug!

In the true spirit of Christmas, *New Times* salutes the following sublimely superfluous presents that will, no doubt, wind up under someone's tree.

- "Little Mac" ($29.95), Hamilton Beach's device that will cook one — and only one — hamburger in two minutes.
- The Salton Electric Peanut Butter Machine ($30). Need we say more?
- Hammacher Schlemmer's car seat with electric blower, to waft cooling zephers up the driver's back and seat for only $19.95. (What ever happened to rolling down the window?)
- Lederer's rainy-day sunglasses (figure out that concept, if you can), complete with battery-operated windshield wipers. Over 2,000 have been sold this year for $5.95.
- Watch freaks who've already bagged the underwater watch, Accutron and quartz digitals, can seize the time and the new math with new miniature electronic calculator and digital watch. Time Computer's economy style in steel runs $400; a limited edition in solid gold, $3,950.
- Designed for the girl who has everything (that's what the ad says): a contact lens case in platinum — by the Platinum Design Collection. The makers say it's the most beautiful way to remove lenses in public. Cost: $1,000.
- Meanwhile, an oil slick by the name of Baron de Rosnay has introduced Petropolis, a Monopoly take-off tooted by *Playgirl* to be the "Sheikest Game in Town," in which Atlantic City real estate has been replaced by Near East oil concessions, and the old scorepad by a mini-calculator, used to compute royalties and interest. Over 750 sets of the game in its least expensive version ($195) have been ordered, 200 luxury sets at $790 (King Hussein alone bought 20), and two millionaires have bought the $20,000 limited edition of the game.
- Last but not least, we tip our stocking cap to Neiman-Marcus, that legendary purveyor of the novel gift, which this year is offering a Saurian Safari into darkest east Utah, in search of the remains of the giant Allosaurus. Store experts, leaving nothing to chance, have already located the dinosaur, so all that remains is to dig. Thus far, one person is slated for the journey, at the cost of $29,995 (the pith helmet is extra). The assembled bones are to be donated to the museum of his/her choice, and the digger gets to keep a bronze cast of the skull and a gargantuan tax deduction.

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WILDERNESS AMERICA celebrates our natural heritage with music inspired by love of the land. It is an exploration of our place within the cycle of living things, blending superbly orchestrated contemporary compositions with natural sounds recorded in the wild.

We have joined other leading conservation groups in sponsoring this limited edition album. All proceeds will help further our land protection programs. The recording of the album has been made possible by a grant from Bank of America Foundation.

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*** your name and address**

I'd like ___ record(s) and have enclosed a $3 check or money order, plus $1 for postage and handling for each album ordered. I understand that all proceeds from the sale of this album will help to further conservation activities.

I wish to charge it to my:
( ) BankAmericard ( ) Master Charge

Account Number **Card Holder Signature**

name _____

address _____

city _____ **state** _____ **zip** _____

PATTI

By Cliff Jahr

The punk—from Elvis Presley to Bruce Springsteen—is a classic hero of our times. Now a skinny rock 'n roll poet named Patti Smith is trying to "drive 'em to a frenzy in Japan and New Jersey" and sing her way into the punk pantheon

She and Bob Dylan sit at the top of the stairs at a hush-hush Greenwich Village party, trading whispers like two schoolboys. Below them, a motion picture camera wrrrs softly while the crowd around the nearby punch bowl tries to look bored, all sighs and folded arms, but fooling no one. After all, this is a rare moment: America's greatest rock hermit, here before our eyes, getting it on with a soon-to-be star who, as an adoring fan, cops some of his style.

Her appearance is startling. Wearing a little black Chaplin jacket, a saffron scarf and denim pants that are pegged with the long laces of her shoes, she looks something like a medieval chimney sweep. The ratty, raven hair appears to have been blunt-cut with a tin snips, and, when she pats it away from her narrow face, one notices fine blue hands like those of a little girl who's lost her mittens. Her name is Patti Smith.

Since the wretched excess committed on poor Bruce Springsteen a few weeks back, a lot of people will see Patti Smith's bid for stardom as another media snow job—which is unfortunate because Patti is something else. She has been kicking around in Greenwich Village literary and freak circles for nine years, attaining status as a minor muse and a cult hero, mainly for her poetry. About three years ago she tried adding a guitarist to back up her readings, which were shoestring affairs in church halls and seedy clubs. It worked, and gradually she was able to put together a group, learn how to sing and develop her own rock 'n roll style. This past year has seen her playing clubs like the Whiskey in L.A., Reno Sweeney and The Other End in New York. In March, with several record companies sniffing the air, Clive Davis of Arista caught her performing at C.B.G.B., a hip Bowery dive, and signed her up. "I was struck by her presence," he says. "She has such a strong sense of who she is and where she's going." Now *Horses*, her just-released first album, is winning fat praise ("An extraordinary disk . . .," says the *New York Times*, "every minute of it is worth repeated rehearings"; "Hits you right in the face," says *Crawdaddy*) and some mixed reactions too ("attractive [but] an 'art statement,'" grouses the *Village Voice*). Meanwhile Patti is becoming the new media darling, which, while it gives her a shot at the top, also threatens to bruise her delicate persona.

Recently returned from SRO gigs at the Roxy in Los Angeles and the Boarding House in San Francisco, Patti plays New York's ultimate rock emporium, The Bottom Line, on December 26-28, days before her 29th birthday. It's all rolling in fast now, and her cult followers from the old days wonder, Will Patti be a star? while her new fans wonder, Just who is this tough little chick?

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LYNN GOLDSMITH

Speculation by the crowd around the punch bowl puts the money on her making it very big.

One of Dylan's pals, MacDougal Mike, is throwing the party to launch the Rolling Thunder tour and to provide a backdrop for a documentary film named *Jack of Hearts*. The Dylan-Smith summit is being staged as a sequel to their widely reported first meeting backstage at The Other End last July. She was strung out on awe that night too.

"I've been talking to him in my fantasies since I was 17," she tells me later, relating the schoolboy whispers. "We were trying to make something happen, connect, make a poem. Somebody said 'baseball field,' so we got right on it and made baseball diamond, then we made the diamond crystallize, then melt, then Dylan said—," she catches herself. "See, I gotta be abstract with you about that." As with Howard Hughes and Elvis, Dylan quotes are not to be passed on lightly by those who wish still to participate in his mystery.

Dylan leaves Patti and comes downstairs to mingle with the punch bowl gawkers, stiffly, at 34 looking a bit like Edward Albee; and, with this, Patti looks crushed. Her face is small and anxious and she gazes at him longingly across the room until finally he beats a star's exit (the first to go). She stays awhile, glaring into the middle distance, speaking to no one and no one daring to invade her space. Then the little chimney sweep descends to MacDougal Street alone and vanishes in the night.

A week later, Patti is sprawled on the floor of her Times Square rehearsal hall with me, alert, businesslike, her curious aura at the party vanished like blue smoke. "When I work hard for something, I don't like people telling me, 'Oh, you're so lucky,' " she says, holding in her hand a copy of *People* that contains a photo of her and Dylan on the stairs. "I ain't *lucky*," she insists, irked by some invisible accuser. "Your ship comes in because you're the captain of it."

Can she see where she's headed?

"Yeah, now more than ever. It's funny. When I was young, I just took it for granted I was going to do something. If I watched Popeye, I wanted to *be* Popeye. I hated being a spectator."

Two members of the band wander into the studio, exchange greetings and settle down on a purple sofa to listen politely. Perhaps this makes Patti think of her leader's role.

"We're heading toward what everyone's heading toward," she says brightly, "—makin' the Perfect Hit Single. To make a song that communicates with everybody, that'll drive 'em to a frenzy in Japan and New Jersey."

So it entertains?

"So it connects. Connects. Look, it has to be physical, y'know? Either in their brain or in their crotch or in their heart. They have to get pissed off, hatchet up the house, throw the record out the window—some black saucer going through the sky. . . ."

Although *Horses* misses the wacky good humor of her live performances, it is a powerful work, honest and unflinching. At its best, it joins spoken verse with basic rock 'n roll licks to make "songs" that extend earlier experiments by Jim Morrison, Frank Zappa, The Fugs, the Velvet Underground and others. Patti uses wrought-up imagery and metaphor that can short out your synapses with their dark world vision: rough sex, violence, apocalypse, suicide and death. Four of the eight cuts are lamentations for the departed (a young girl washed up on a beach, psychologist Wilhelm Reich, Jim Morrison and Jimi Hendrix, though none is named). Two cuts celebrate young girls; one is "Gloria," the Van Morrison hit, the other is "Kimberly," about her baby sister. Another cut is an understandable, full-throated wail for "Free Money."

What are these songs about?

"I don't say nothin'. It's just regular talkin'. There's nothing to decipher." But their dark intensity prompts the listener to scour for politics blowin' in the wind somewhere. At times the words are obscured altogether, and there is no printed lyric sheet to help out—but no matter. Patti's artistry is not in the content, which is raw and puerile; it's in her form, her bold styling, her sure sense of how far to go.

The best example of this is "Land," a 9½-minute cut with an ambiguous narrative about a boy named Johnny who is violated somehow in a hallway by a second boy. As it builds, overdubbing of her voice combines with the rock back beat to reach a shrill "Johnny gets a feeling he's surrounded by HORSES, HORSES, HORSES, HORSES." This cues "Do you know how to Pony?" and a straightforward rendition of "Land of 1,000 Dances," the 1963 hit by Cannibal and the Headhunters, dissolving into rushes of visceral and sexual imagery, with Patti incanting, ". . . the waves came in like Arabian stallions gradually lapping into seahorses . . . he picked up the blade and pressed it against his smooth throat and let it dip in." After the urgent ebbs and flows of such verse, the song ends on a tiny whisper.

"We're not looking for hit singles on this one," says Clive Davis. "She's not mass-oriented." Indeed, *Horses* may not be for AM radio play or disco dancing, the usual path for hits, but it is rich in word pictures for listening in the dark and filled with throbbing adolescent preoccupations of the kind that draw faithful legions to a Melanie or a Janis Ian. But make no mistake about it—Patti is not sentimental. When the arrangements are raunchy rock 'n roll, and loud—like a Sixties group in the high school gym—they most resemble the disbanded Velvet Underground, from which came the album's producer, John Cale.

Oddly enough, if her style of fusing rock and poetry puts Patti in the big time, she will fill a unique space in rock's male-dominated spectrum of images—the urban street punk. An American icon popularized in the Dead End Kids movies of the Thirties, the punk image has traveled through the styles of James Dean and Elvis Presley up to Mick Jagger and Springsteen, providing four generations of adolescent males with lessons in street macho. Now, folks, for something completely different—the punk as a girl.

Onstage, at 100 pounds, with all the hulking mass of a UNICEF poster child, Patti jabs and swings and slams home a song like a contender for the flyweight crown. Her stage presence is glaring and "cool," one of her favorite Fifties words. Her patter is top-of-the-head scat ("Did you know Sonja Henie died in a plane crash?"), sometimes foxy ("Friends of mine like Perry Como like to stop by and catch my act, but Perry couldn't be here tonight cuz he's in Las Vegas"), often deadpan heavy ("I'll put John Lennon over Walt Whitman any day").

If a bit of Dylan mystery dust has rubbed on her coat, it may have to do with her dangerous intensity. Will she burn out? an audience wonders. And could this aging adolescent ever learn to cope with menopause and denture breath? At the very same time, it is her overreaching and her skinny frame that help audiences accept her omnisexual swagger (the same goes for Jagger and David Bowie). Her alley cat ballsiness comes off vulnerable, non-threatening—even slightly comic, which is a reflection of the age-old theatrical tradition she is breaking through. Before now, tough-talking female entertainers who were not pretty had to relate to audiences by playing their difference for laughs—comediennes like Cass Daley, Martha Raye and Nancy Walker. But Patti's

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Cliff Jahr, a New York free lance, has written recently for New York, *the* Village Voice *and the Sunday* New York Times.

music and ad-libbing makes audiences jive and grin and slap their knees, charmed by the lack of defensiveness, becoming themselves her defenders. It's the stuff that cults are made of.

Her punkiness may be the thing that most grabs the mass imagination, at least in big cities, and especially because it's not a put-on or some kind of political statement. It is simply Patti in harmony with herself, the way she is.

She's not a light-my-cigarette feminist like Helen Reddy or a pretend girl gang leader like Suzy Quatro: "I don't give a shit about women," she says, "or the role of women or 'The Year of the Woman.' As far as I'm concerned, being any gender is a drag." On her suggestion, Arista's promotion describes her as "beyond gender," but a close friend of hers insists, "Some of that is crap. Y'know, secretly she loves Bergdorf Goodman and little lace panties."

If there are clues to Patti's complexity in her Italian/black-Irish ancestry or her working-class childhood in Pitman, New Jersey, nobody's talking about it much, especially Patti, who has come to find discussion of her biography a bore. Born in Chicago December 30, 1946, she's the oldest of four children, two sisters and a brother, in a family that's close-knit. Her mother waited tables, her father read the Bible, worked 29 years in a factory and spent a lifetime betting on race horses. "He was always searching for the perfect system," she says fondly, "and my mother liked to fantasize. I'm a real perfect synthesis of them both." Though she grew into a tomboy who ran with the local dead end kids, her sense of style and fantasy eventually led to experiments with ways to look interestingly female. There was her Verushka period, her Anouk Aimee period, her Garbo period, each followed by a return to her trademark of pegged pants and T-shirt, "because I look good in them," she says rightly.

Later, when she became pregnant, ending a freshman scholarship to Glassboro State College, she had the baby and gave it up for adoption in nearby Philadelphia. She wrote of it in a slim volume, *Seventh Heaven* (1972, Telegraph Books):

. . . bloated. pregnant. I crawl thru sand. like a/lame dog. like a crab. pull my fat baby belly to/the sea. pure edge. pull my hair out by the roots./roll and drag and claw like a bitch. like a bitch./like a bitch.

"She's soft under that tough outside," says an old girlfriend, "and I don't think she quite got over the baby . . . maybe it's the thing that drives her so."

After that Patti took off for New York, where "nobody gave a damn what I wore," she told *Mademoiselle*. "There's no place that seduces you and perverts you and inspires you like New York does." She began to paint and draw in a style reminiscent of George Grosz, with human figures speaking inside cartoon balloons. (A half dozen of these drawings are leaning against the rehearsal studio wall: "Ooops," says one little fellow. "Oh shit!" says another. They are amazingly good but not for sale or I'd buy one.)

Drawing little figures who spoke finally lead her to writing. With the help of playwright Sam Shepard, guitarist Al Lanier (Blue Oyster Cult) and the celestial inspiration of 19th-century French poet Arthur Rimbaud, she waded into the rapids of symbolist poetry. From the start, her public performance of it, complete with props and costume changes, won over the gallery with its closed-eyed earnestness and full-bodied delivery.

"As far as I'm concerned, being any gender is a drag"

When rock critic Lenny Kaye joined her as a guitarist, he was unhindered at first by knowing just two chords. Later pianist Richard Sohl became her musical collaborator.

Together with Tom Verlaine (her longtime boyfriend, now guitarist with Television, a New York group), they cut a 45 that was pressed into 1,000 copies and fast became a collector's item, mainly because of "Piss Factory," a hot scat monologue remembering her days doing piecework in a Jersey sweatshop ("So hot in here/hot like Sahara/These bitches are just too lame to understand/Too goddamn grateful to get this job to know they're getting screwed in the ass").

In 1973 *Wttt* appeared (Gotham Book Mart), her second important book of poetry, as unbashful as the first:

. . . I'm gonna peep in bo's bodice. lay down darling don't/be modest let me slip my hand in. ohhh thats soft thats/nice thats not used up. ohhh don't cry. wet whats wet?/oh that. heh heh. thats just the rain lambie pie. now/don't squirm. let me put my rubber on. I'm a wolf in a/lamb skin trojan. ohh yeah thats hard thats good. now/don't tighten up, open up be-bop. lift that little butt/up. ummm open wider be-bop. come on. nothing. can. stop/me. now. ohhh ahhh. isnt that good. my. melancholy be-bop. . . .

Patti is annoyed at the suggestion that *Wttt* contains some poems written from a lesbian point of view. "Labels are finished," she says with feeling. "I don't write lesbian poetry. Look, a human being turns me on. If it's Anita Pallenberger or Mick Jagger—either one of them is going to inspire me to write something. Y'know, if my cunt aches, I don't think like it's a boy or girl doing it. I just don't." She pauses to glance out the window. "When I was real young, my sister Kimberly's mouth used to drive me crazy. I thought it was the sexiest thing I ever saw. That has nothing to do with incest, lesbianism. I just recognized a good mouth when I saw one."

The band is warming up now, complete with bass guitarist Ivan Kral and drummer Jay Dee Daugherty. Patti says to hang around the rehearsal if I like, and I do.

Watching her run things, one is struck by the firm but gentle control of her direction, her decisiveness, her concern for nuance. Then you realize that what may seem freewheeling and off-the-wall about her, the tacky old rock 'n roll riffs, the eclectic sound and styling from Lotte Lenya to Laura Nyro to Jagger to the Ronettes, the undisciplined verse, even the "I don't give a damn how I look" look—you realize, after all, these are acts of her conscious will. As is most everything about Patti. Her hair, for instance, gets its blue-blackness from dye schlepped from the Arab section of Brooklyn. Though as messy as if she'd done the hustle in a speeding U-Haul, it is sensibly cut in bangs that cover a high forehead, shorten a narrow face, punctuate her beautiful smoky-blue eyes and frame the profile that one begins to notice is handsome as a hawk. Or her trademark T-shirt: While it stresses her matchstick arms, I think she's imagined our delight in discovering that underneath the face of Keith Richard stenciled on its face there are nice cupcake breasts.

Art conceals art sometimes by wearing a spontaneous and simple look, like Chaplin's pratfalls, Dylan's hog-calling and Jackson Pollock's paint spills. Patti's little "Ooops" and "Oh Shit!" people who study me from their frames against the wall have that spontaneity and simplicity. So does *Horses*. In fact, so does Patti. "I don't get anywhere by accident," she says.

Patti knows what she's doing. By filtering her unschooled perceptions through a fine talent, she is creating herself most of all.●

PHOTOGRAPH BY RON DE MILT

PRIME TIME POSTMORTEM

The demise of *Fay* is a model of how TV land got wasted

By Richard M. Levine

It was an odd event, part preview, part final performance. A month after *Fay*'s formal cancellation on NBC, the cast of the short-lived sitcom had gathered in a screening room of Technicolor Studios to view a rough print of the series' last episode. *Fay*, you may recall, portrayed the adventures of a reasonably sane 43-year-old divorcée, played by Lee Grant, struggling to get along on her own in the face of a band of pleasant lunatics, including her ex-husband, Jack, her strait-laced daughter, Linda, and her son-in-law, Elliot, a pretentious plastic surgeon who felt that "Michelangelo worked in marble. I use fatty tissue." This particular episode, the ninth in the series, concerned an argument between Elliot, who wanted to have a second child, and Linda, who didn't. The show was hardly Chekhov, but at least it took a real-life situation and dealt with it in a way that was generally funny without being farcical and managed to make a telling point or two as well. "What's a baby to you?" a suddenly strong-willed Linda tells Elliot at the end. "A small picture in your wallet and a little head to pat. Well, it's much more than that to me and right now I don't want more."

Alas, the episode will probably never be seen by many more than the dozen or so people in the screening room that day. NBC canceled *Fay* a scant three weeks into the television season and allowed several more episodes to run whenever there wasn't anything else around to preempt the show. And yet in a TV schedule that has been accurately dubbed by *Variety* "a movable famine," *Fay* seemed pretty substantial fare, by far the best new sitcom of the year. Sure, the show had its share of souped-up and unmotivated yuks, but for the most part you could watch it without wondering what the NBC tour guide slipped the studio audience along with their ticket stubs. Part of what distinguished *Fay* was Lee Grant herself, who is a dramatic actress rather than a comedienne, and so played against the grain of the broader humor. Another factor was the show's chief writer, a talented young woman named Susan Harris who was too respectful of her subject, having been propelled into a career after her own divorce, to play it entirely for laughs.

Enough people agreed about *Fay*'s distinction to make it, in Susan Harris' words, "the most successful flop ever." Before the season even began, a *New York Times* critic called the show "the funniest television comedy I have seen in a long time" and Lee Grant was featured on the cover of *Cue* magazine. After the cancellation, Lee Grant made the cover of *Ms.* ("This Woman Was Too Real For TV") and another *Times* critic wrote that "wasting as much talent as Lee Grant in just a month exempts you from having to waste any more until January."

Lee Grant personally generated a publicity blitz for *Fay* after an appearance on *The Tonight Show* the very day of its cancellation. First, she showed two versions of a scene from an upcoming episode in which the fiancé of Fay's best friend makes a pass at her. In the first version Fay's response is, "Stop right now or I will do something unpleasant, in which case you will have to take up a whole new hobby"; in the second version the last clause had been redubbed, at the insistence of NBC censors, "... in which case I will do something physical and unpleasant." Next, Lee Grant redubbed Marvin Antonowsky, the network executive responsible for axing the show, "the mad programmer" (his previous sobriquet among reporters had been "Attila the Hun of Television"). And finally, she graphically demonstrated her feelings about Antonowsky by slowly raising her middle finger on high before the camera—a gesture that the network blipped out even faster than *Fay*.

A month after *Fay*'s cancellation the rest of the cast was no more resigned to their fate. Some of the hostility that became evident after the projectionist turned the lights in the screening room back on was directed at rival series. ("I just don't *believe* that show will never air," one actor said, and then added, "and I don't believe *Phyllis* is the biggest hit of the year.") Some of the bitterness was directed at studio audiences. ("Did you hear what happened to Lorenzo's pilot?" another actor asked. "No one laughed the whole time they were making it. Afterward they found out the ushers had

brought the audience for *Let's Make a Deal* into the wrong studio.") But most of the cast's resentment seemed to be directed at the medium itself. Since it was the last time they would be together as a group, the actors stood around trying to bolster one another's spirits until the projectionist said he had to start the next screening. Then they took the elevator downstairs and said long goodbyes in the parking lot outside. Finally, Joe Silver, who played Fay's ex-husband, broke the pervading gloom. "Fuck television!" he yelled out. "Let's all go to the *movies*."

If the actors' frustrations reflected months of involvement with the show, then the disappointment of writer Susan Harris and producer Paul Witt (who headed Danny Thomas Productions) was all the greater. One spoke about the cancellation in terms of infanticide, the other in terms of crib death. Both agreed their baby was conceived in the spring of 1974 during dinner at a Chinese restaurant and pitched to NBC—a network they chose because it was perennially weak in comedy—shortly thereafter. They had originally intended Fay to be in her early fifties, but NBC wanted her to be more glamorous and ten years younger so that she would attract "better demographics"—the 18-49-year-old group that is the prime target of television advertisers.

That NBC did not object strenuously to the very idea of a series about a newly divorced woman was a testament to changing social attitudes. In the past, divorce was about as welcome a subject to television executives as license challenges. Television was a family-oriented medium; divorce was clearly not a family-oriented subject. Most television widows started out, like Phyllis herself, as divorcées before someone at the networks had second thoughts. But as the number of broken homes in the country reached one out of three, divorced people came to constitute a sizable audience in themselves. Television broached the subject of divorce in its usual forthright manner, first by making light of it (a happily married Maude can afford to joke about her *three* divorces), then by testing the reaction of advertisers (these days one popular wine company even has a woman in one of its ads intoning, "Now that I'm divorced I have to make the choices in my life. . .") and finally by giving short shrift to the only realistic treatment of it.

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Once the NBC development department approved the idea and the network signed a "step deal," *Fay* began its hazardous course from initial concept to pilot script to actual pilot to series commitment. In this case the pilot script was greeted with great enthusiasm at NBC and accepted without a rewrite. The first real obstacle came when Witt and Harris said they wanted Lee Grant for the lead role. Too urban and sophisticated, NBC executives objected. "If a woman isn't Doris Day in an organdy apron," Susan Harris said, "the networks find her threatening. But there was no way I was gonna let some fluffy lady do my show." It was not until Witt and Harris showed network programmers some film clips in which Grant displayed a more vulnerable and light-hearted side that they relented. "But I gotta tell you," Larry White, who was then NBC's programming chief, told them, "you're digging your own grave."

The pilot was filmed during a frantic week last February with Alan Arkin directing. According to Paul Witt, when it was shown to NBC's top executives in March "there was an extraordinary celebratory air in the room. Those guys never laugh. They laughed." Larry White admitted he was wrong about Lee Grant, and several network executives called it "the funniest half-hour we have." But some concern was voiced about the notion of a woman and her ex-husband discussing their affairs together, and the too-urban-and-sophisticated charge (read: Will it play in Peoria?) was raised about the entire show.

Although they were repeatedly told that *Fay* was a sure bet to "go to series," Witt and Harris decided to fly to New York during NBC's "selling season" last April, when the network's final schedule is drawn up and rumors fly thicker than ticker tape in a parade. "We went in as a 99-1 favorite to make the schedule," Susan Harris recalled, "and watched the odds steadily deteriorate all week. On Wednesday it was 50-50 and by Thursday we were off the schedule." The main reason for *Fay*'s precipitous change of fate was the network's insistence that its new sitcoms be likely candidates for a "family hour" (8:00 to 9:00 p.m.) time slot. The question was whether an admittedly "urban and sophisticated" comedy about a free-spirited divorcée could survive family hour's restrictions on sexual by-play.

Witt and Harris decided that family hour was better than no hour at all, and they stayed up all night tailoring the pilot script and future story lines to its puritanical specifications. A reference to kissing a girl "with your mouth open" became kissing "with your eyes closed"; a story about Fay and her boss having an affair that almost destroys their friendship was turned into an episode in which Fay's boss *thinks* he's in love with her until she makes him come to his senses; another about Fay and Jack meeting at a wedding and finding themselves in bed together the next morning was scrapped altogether.

On Friday Witt and Harris learned that *Fay* had made NBC's final lineup. Unfortunately, it was scheduled for Thursday at 8:30, which gave every indication of being a near-lethal blow to the series. For starters, its "lead-in" show at 8:00 o'clock was the network's other new comedy, *The Montefuscos,* a loud, unfunny sitcom about a family of pasta-loving Italians (it had originally been titled *Sunday Dinner*) that looked at times to be the longest Ronzoni commercial on the air. To make matters worse, *Fay* was pitted against one of the most successful shows in TV history, *The Waltons,* a soapy family drama that aired on CBS from 8:00 to 9:00 p.m. In certain sections of mid-America one might possibly be excused for not watching *The Waltons* at all, but never for switching channels halfway through.

Other NBC executives argued that at the time, Thursday at 8:30 didn't seem like an automatic death warrant for *Fay.* "Although *The Waltons* was a strong show," said Terry Keegan, who was then a network vice-president for development, "it has what we call a bi-mobile audience—younger and older people. There was a good chance *Fay* could find its audience in the middle. Don't forget, we knew the competition on ABC was also a new comedy, *On the Rocks.* Plus, *Fay* was hammocked in between two new shows on Thursday that had tested very highly, *The Montefuscos* and *Ellery Queen.*"

It's hard to say just how important the testing of pilots is in network scheduling decisions. NBC officials give out a one-factor-but-far-from-the-whole-story line as if they're reading from 3× 5 cards. But whenever anyone connected with *Fay* complained to these same officials about the show's time slot, they were invariably told about *The Montefuscos* pilot's test results. And no doubt some of the network's hesitation about the *Fay* pilot during selling season had to do with the fact that it tested only passably well.

All three networks test their pilots over cable systems in selected areas, with fliers sent to viewers beforehand introducing the show. ("We were told with a straight face that we did well in certain large metropolitan areas," Susan Harris

said, "like New York, Los Angeles and Wilmington.") In addition, NBC and ABC both test their pilots at a place called Preview House on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles. "It's a perfectly horrible procedure," Susan Harris recalled recently. "Everyone in the audience works an approval/disapproval knob. I stood in the control booth watching graphs that broke down their reactions in different ways. First they play a 20-year-old Mr. Magoo cartoon as a control. At the high point of the cartoon, when Magoo is sliding down a mountain on an avalanche, the graph always peaks between a 7.3 and a 7.6. That day Magoo finished at 7.3, and everyone was running around the booth saying, 'Uh oh, we got a low Magoo tonight.' I thought, this is insane! I'm sitting here with a bunch of grown-ups and they're talking low Magoo.

"Then they put on the pilot. Some of the biggest laughs never got near the Magoo line that the audience goes bananas over. I think it's, 'Avalanche is better than no lanche at all.' In fact, the whole thing is Catch-22 because they tell you that if your pilot goes as high as Magoo, something's wrong and they have to redo the test. Thank God the booth was soundproof. At one point I couldn't contain myself any longer and I screamed: 'Schmucks! *Schmucks!*' "

Testing was only the first indignity NBC visited on the show. After production began early in July, a new script was sent every week to NBC's broadcast standards department, and every week the network's list of requested deletions grew in length. Some of the censorship demands were standard for all of NBC's entertainment shows. References to brand names and existing organizations were fictionalized whenever the censor caught them. (Time Inc. would probably not be thrilled by the broadcast standards' note that read: "*People* magazine, I presume, is fictitious.") Other lines were questioned on grounds of bad taste ("People with cross-eyes as a physical affliction should not be made a source of humor"). And even the most harmless mention of an elected official was routinely struck for fear he or she would demand equal time.

But the real problem was *Fay*'s family-hour time slot. Although family hour was designed to reduce the level of sex and violence on all shows aired between 8:00 and 9:00 p.m., it has hit those socially relevant sitcoms that formed the cutting edge of television hardest of all. Since no "action" show can survive without violence, whereas some comedy can get along without sexual innuendo, the networks scheduled all of their cops-and-robbers series after 9:00 and most of their sitcoms during family hour. In the case of an "urban and sophisticated" comedy like *Fay*, NBC's family-hour strictures were crippling.

Even the mildest obscenities, such as hell or damn, were routinely red-penciled. According to one program note, "Reference to God must at all times be reserved for those moments when they can be delivered in a reverent or prayerful manner." So strictly was this rule applied that during one episode, when Fay learns that Jack has had a heart attack and reacts by saying, "Oh, my God!" the network censor raised an objection. When he was asked what she would be permitted to say upon hearing such news, he thought for a moment and suggested, "Lord love a duck." The compromise reached was, "Oh, dear God";

According to one program note by the censors: "Reference to God must at all times be reserved for those moments when they can be delivered in a reverent or prayerful manner"

from then on, only one "my God" was allowed per script and the rest were automatically changed to "dear God."

Perfectly ordinary words and phrases with any sexual connotation (for example, stretch marks, pregnant, flasher, score, tails, stick it, orgies, rape) were deleted from scripts. Likewise nearly all sexual puns and innuendos. "Sexual innuendos built around an accountant screwing up the books who turns out to be a redhead are unacceptable," reads one broadcast standards' note. Another says: "This discussion of seduction is handled too openly. You will have to find some different way of approaching the problem." A third: "Please eliminate the discussion about the mating of frogs." As the weeks went on, the censor began cutting lines that weren't even remotely sexual in content, such as Danny's explanation that he had lost his girlfriend after she "met a guy in a health food store. It was love at first sight and now he's sharing her wheat germ."

Sometimes the censor wanted to see the staging of a particular scene before making his judgment. "The staging of Vic's attempted pass at Fay will determine acceptability," he commented about one scene. "He may touch the scar on Fay's knee, but she should then take his hand away so that the stroking of the scar or any caressing is eliminated." Other times a bit of action had to be balanced with a cautionary statement: "It's understood that neither you nor NBC wishes to see Danny 'falling down drunk.' Because of the family time slot it will be necessary to make a statement against the use of alcohol."

On rare occasions the broadcast standards department insisted that changes be made even after an episode had been filmed. The pilot episode opened with Fay coming home from a weekend in Big Sur with her new lover. When Jack questioned her about where she'd been, she originally said: "I went with a man, Jack. I'm having an affair." Broadcast standards insisted that the line be redubbed: "I met a man, Jack. I think it's serious."

The one move NBC made that actually helped *Fay* was to jump the start of the season by a week for the premiere. With a rerun of *The Waltons* as its chief competition, *Fay* captured a 36 share in the national Nielsen index and a whopping 48 share in New York. The Nielsen index—or "the numbers," as it is commonly referred to by television people—is the networks' scoreboard, and a 36 share meant that 36 percent of all television sets in use at 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 4, 1975, were tuned to the premiere of *Fay*, as measured by little black boxes that the Nielsen people had attached to 1,200 television sets across the land. With three major networks (not counting some drain-off for independent, public and UHF stations) competing for the same audience, a 30 share was considered the minimum a series needs to stay afloat and a 40 share constituted a hit show. But without its normal competition, *Fay*'s good showing meant little, except perhaps to confirm the network's suspicion that such an "urban and sophisticated" comedy would do better in New York than in the rest of the country.

Everyone connected with *Fay* was warned by NBC officials to expect a precipitant drop in the next two weeks as viewers sampled the other networks, which is exactly what happened. *Fay* got a 22 national share its second time out and an 18 its third, although the New York ratings remained pretty good.

Whenever Witt and Harris expressed concern about the low numbers, NBC executives told them not to worry, that it was the fourth and fifth weeks that mattered and if the show didn't work out in its present time slot it would be moved to a better one before mid-season. It was hard (and, as matters turned out, misguided) advice to take. "They've got you walking around with a thermometer up your ass," Lee Grant said. "Of course you pay attention."

In several interviews Marvin Antonowsky, who replaced Larry White as NBC's chief programmer last spring, suggested that new developments in audience research permitted the unprecedentedly quick decision to cancel *Fay*. ("Fast input makes possible fast output," was what he actually said.) To all those connected with the show, not to mention a large segment of Hollywood's creative community, Antonowsky has become something of a hate figure, only because he seems to symbolize the cost-accountancy experts who have increasingly pushed aside more show business-oriented types for the key network jobs. ("What a guy like Antonowsky would really like," Neil Simon told Lee Grant after the demise of *Fay*, "is for us to develop the idea for a show, write the script, produce the series, star in it and cancel it ourselves.") Actually, Antonowsky is something of a hybrid, a marketing and research expert (for many years he was head of research at ABC) who wears tinted glasses, a drooping mustache and mod suits on his six-foot-six-inch frame so loud, according to a colleague, that "there are only two checks on them, back and front." He has theater posters lining his New York office and calls everyone "bubee," yet he speaks a computer dialect composed of television jargon and survey statistics.

The new audience research technique that Antonowsky referred to is the Trendex "call-back" service, which measures how well people liked the shows they watched and so is considered "qualitative" research as opposed to the "quantitative" research of the Nielsen index. The week *Fay* was canceled, its Trendex report was particularly disastrous. Only 3 percent of those respondents who had seen *Fay* rated it excellent (the average so-called Q score for a sitcom that week was 12).

In a postmortem comment Antonowsky explained that most viewers found Fay "unsympathetic because she was divorced," a situation that was only compounded by "having her ex-husband continually popping in." In a sentence that defies the very premise of the show, he added: "It would have been better if she had been abandoned by him—that would have made the character more sympathetic."

In the ratings war, as in any other, position is half the battle. The fact is that *Fay*'s "numbers" were low largely because *The Montefuscos* was a dud, *The Waltons* was pulling its usual 40-plus share and ABC's prison comedy, *On the Rocks*, which attracted the male audience that *The Waltons* never appealed to, was doing surprisingly well.

The question that plagues people connected with the show is why Antonowsky and other NBC executives refused to move *Fay* to a better time, as they had repeatedly promised to do. NBC wasn't providing any easy answers—or any answers at all. To talk with any television executive, a reporter has to go through the network's "public information" office. When I asked to talk with the people responsible for canceling *Fay*, NBC's chief flack said bluntly: "We don't talk about failures." But one reason for the quick cancellation was certainly Antonowsky's complete faith in "the numbers," including a survey showing that many of the viewers who had watched *Fay* did not plan to check out future episodes. Another factor must have been that until NBC bolstered its seasonal ratings with the World Series, it was running a dismal third in the network competition this fall—an unprecedented situation that did not lend itself to risk-taking in the corporate mind. And what was particularly true of NBC this season was perennially true of television as a business. There's simply too much money at stake to take chances. The difference between a prime-time show with a 40 share and one with a 20 share was $60,000 a minute of advertising time. And that was just the beginning. The poor showing of *The Montefuscos* and *Fay* was hurting the rest of NBC's Thursday night lineup, which in turn would affect its seasonal ratings. With $2 billion a year in advertising revenues as the grand prize in the Great TV Sweepstakes, network executives literally could not afford to gamble.

"If a woman isn't Doris Day, in an organdy apron, the networks find her threatening"

Nonetheless, only the day before *Fay* was canceled the show's producers were told again that it would be moved soon, probably to Friday evening. ("The network is like the scariest kind of doctor," Lee Grant said. "Because he's so cheerful and the prognosis is so positive, you know you're going to die any minute.") When Harris and Witt were suddenly called away from a rehearsal to a meeting with Antonowsky and several other network executives, they thought they were going to learn about the schedule change. As they waited in an anteroom, the producers of *The Montefuscos* came out and said their show had just been canceled.

As Susan Harris recalled the meeting, before Antonowsky could get an explanation out of his mouth she "went berserk. All the lies we had been told suddenly came home to roost. It wasn't one of those times when you go away thinking of all the nasty things you should have said. I said them all."

A week later Lee Grant went to a Hollywood benefit where she suspected that she might run into Antonowsky. She thought about all the rumors she had been hearing for weeks about *Fay*'s fate and decided she would give a confrontation network executive a taste of his own medicine should the confrontation occur. "I heard the news about you, Mr. Antonowsky," she would say, "and I just want you to know how sorry I am." Alas, Antonowsky never showed up that night.

Like chickens kept under constant light, television lays its eggs at odd times. On December 4 NBC premiered its replacement for *Fay*, a shelf-full of canned laughter called *The Cop and the Kid*. With only a few of this season's batch of new shows rating hits, and with overall prime-time viewing down considerably, it seems that all the networks can do is ask the Nielsen people to check their sampling techniques and then give us more of the same or worse. New shows tend to be spinoffs of successful series or, if a particularly vivid imagination is at work, a combination of two successful series. *The Cop and the Kid* is half *Chico and the Man*, half *All in the Family*, the whole clearly half-baked.

It concerns a fat, bigoted-but-lovable Irish cop—Archie Bunker in uniform—forced by a court to take in a street-wise black kid who cracks insulting one-liners like he was Don Rickles at the Sands. The pilot episode relies heavily on dumb sight gags and dim-witted racial "puns" such as these from the cop: "Everything went black—no offense, kid," and "I use the word 'blackmail' advisedly." If this kind of thing is what passes for humor on television these days, all one can say is "Lord love a duck." ●

Music

Little Feat, don't fail us now

By Janet Maslin

Lowell George, the deceptively drowsy-eyed maestro from whose teensy extremities Little Feat took their name, sipped cognac as he woke from an afternoon nap and cleared up some very minor questions about the group's fifth album. Like the back cover, adorned with medical bills commemorating drummer Richie Hayward's recent motorcycle crack-up: "Well, everyone wanted to know how Richie was. And it also states the current status quo in terms of the medical arts. I thought it was a very interesting social study; it may not be." And the title: "Yeah, *The Last Record Album.* We called it that so that every time somebody wrote about it, they'd have to say, 'Little Feat's newest album, *The Last Record Album.*' It looks dumb in type, it really does. You'll find out."

It was suggested that italics might alleviate the problem, but George merely raised one knowing eyebrow. "That's the easy way out. But I'm looking for the person that does it, figures out the double entendre and meets it head-on with a multilevel personal diatribe, either for or against, I don't care. Whichever way, I want to see somebody really *scratch the surface.*"

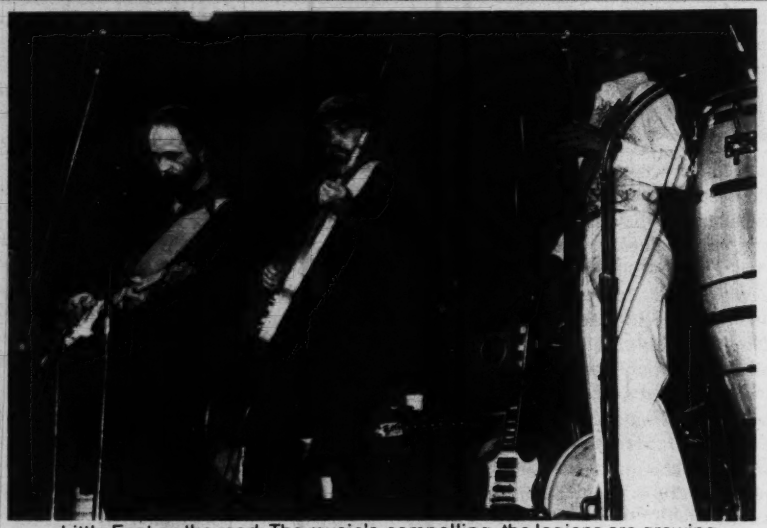
When it comes to Little Feat, scratching the surface may be the only thing to do, since their music is every bit as indescribable as it is seductive. Except for Kenny Gradney, the bassist whose moves recall the worst of *Hullabaloo,* there's nothing particularly flashy about the band (George, whose vocals and guitar dominate Little Feat's live set, looks even sleepier onstage than after a real nap). Their material sounds as homespun as The Band's and often as original—and yet, as in The Band's case, the funk never belies their sophistication. That very tension between libido and cool professionalism is part of what makes them compelling. Another asset is their sly, deadpan humor ("Well, my telephone was ringing, and they told me it was Chairman Mao," moans George's "A Apolitical Blues." "You got to tell him anything, 'cause I just don't want to talk to him now"). But whatever the sources of Little Feat's tremendous appeal, this much is salient: If they haven't struck it rich yet, well, neither are they very famous.

Feat's followers do make up in devotion what they lack in numbers, and their legions are growing. *Dixie Chicken,* their third (and probably best) album, sold only about 100,000 copies, which marked a big improvement over both *Little Feat* and *Sailin' Shoes. Feats Don't Fail Me Now,* their excellent fourth, sold a quarter of a million. Still, none of this is even roughly commensurate with these records' critical esteem or with the big predictions Feat's fans like to make for the group. George, whose eyebrows move heavenward as he talks about sales figures, puts it this way: "Let's just say we've been takin' our time."

Little Feat have had a number of lucky breaks lately, none of which seems to have done them the slightest bit of good. Each of Linda Ronstadt's two best-selling albums, *Heart Like A Wheel* and *Prisoner in Disguise,* included a Lowell George song ("Willin'" and "Roll Um Easy," respectively). But George thinks that "the kind of audience that bought the greater portion of those albums doesn't care—that's something I discovered a long time ago, that people listen to songs and they don't really know or care where they came from." And Cher, who recorded "Rock and Roll Doctor," one of Lowell's very best (his version features some of the

Maestro Lowell George: He's taking a low profile and polishing others' work now.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD AARON



Little Feat on the road: The music's compelling, the legions are growing.

wittiest panting you could ever hope to hear), managed to include it on an album that went unnoticed. Still, there were fringe benefits. "I was immediately thrust into the jet set," George recalls. "She invited me to her birthday party." Their friendship may have cooled slightly when Cher asked George to join her on the record and he inadvertently observed that singing duos were chump change.

Historians specializing in great undiscovered rock bands may someday cite *The Last Record Album* as a slight turning point in Feat's career. This time, the best numbers ("One Love Stand," "Romance Dance," "All That You Dream") come from the rest of the band, with George taking a back seat; his songs are the album's shortest. (George firmly believes in being concise: "It's like advertising—you say it and you get out of there.") Part of his withdrawal has to do with his taking his organizational role ever more seriously: "As a producer, I wanted to produce an album of the group's. I wanted to take other people's material and polish it, make it as strong as it could be. However the album is, I think that everybody got to do what they wanted to do—including me." George also has an individual contract as of last year and has presumably been stowing away material for a projected solo album that could include numbers by Jackson Browne, Mose Allison, Allen Toussaint and the Meters.

George's lower profile may be one reason why the Feat of *The Last Record Album* seem to be tightening up, honing their technique ever more sharply. It's even more apparent in their live show (which is long and polished, in accordance with George's earnest concern for "musical scruples" and giving audiences their money's worth): Little Feat are by now so good they're getting to be *too* good. Though George's winning weariness belies the intensity with which the group performs, they now seem to be concentrating more and more fully on pure finesse. Though their set is exhilarating, lately it feels more like watching gears mesh than sparks fly.

As George says, "It's been a matter of time for quite some time now." If the new *Last* album is a tad below par, perhaps that can be attributed to the same restlessness and frustration that have driven the group to at least one temporary breakup in the past. In any case, Little Feat don't need, in fact can't *afford,* to improve any more than they already have. It's high time their ship came in.

Movies

Two in a straitjacket

By Nik Cohn

As a novel, *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* was an aberration that worked. In many ways, it was an archetypal Sixties folly, hysterical in conception, grossly overwritten, overflowing with Haight-Ashbury inanities. By any objective standard, there was no defending it. Yet somehow, against all logic, it came through. At the last, its passion and sheer gut impact were so great that quibbles seemed irrelevant.

Now, as filmed by Milos Forman, it is no longer hysterical. But then, by the same token, it is no longer powerful either. And, by and large, the loss seems more than the gain.

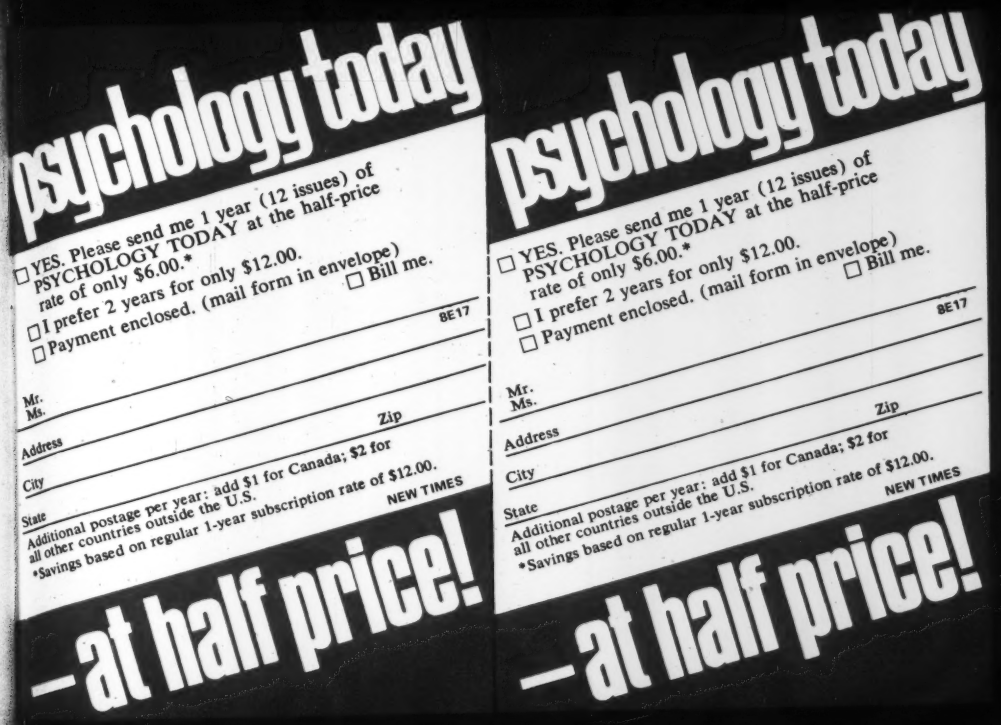
The plot, on the whole, sticks fairly close to the book. As in Ken Kesey's original, the action centers around one Randle McMurphy. Drifter, petty hustler, professional jackanapes, he has been serving time in an Oregon jail, convicted of having too much fun. So he gets himself transferred to the local insane asylum, figuring that the living there will treat him with more respect.

Not so. By having himself committed, he traps himself for eternity. At one stroke, he becomes a lunatic, certified by law, and from that label there can be no escape.

He is surrounded by the misshapen: creatures counter, original, spare, strange. A young boy stammers uncontrollably, a fat man weeps like an abandoned infant, an ancient waltzes untiringly, ecstatically with some invisible partner. Human ferrets, lips twisted, teeth bared, snap and sneer. A supposedly deaf-mute Indian, mountainous, impenetrable, watches from a distance. And all of them are overseen, ruled, by Nurse Ratched.

The nurse, who was called Big Nurse in the novel, is all authority, everywhere, ever. Trim and starched, she has a smile like the drop of a portcullis, takes confession with the frozen sympathy of a psychic Grand Inquisitor. Then, deaf, blind, she imposes her laws by the divine right of indifference.

Within this world McMurphy is poison, heresy incarnate. It's not that he rebels, at least not in the beginning. But he simply does not understand the rules, cannot grasp a system in which pleasure has no meaning, all will and self-direction is obsolete. "You're no crazier than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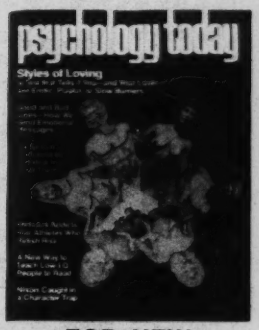

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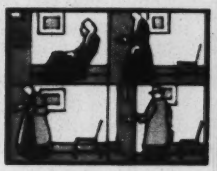

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FIRST CLASS

the average bunch of assholes out walking the street," he cries, exasperated by his fellow inmates' passivity. And he proceeds to hurl them alternatives. He organizes them into a basketball team, hustles them at poker, fantasizes the World Series for them, even, in one glorious afternoon of escape, takes them out deep-sea fishing.

His energy, his nerve, overwhelms them; they are sucked in irresistibly. By degrees, they creep out from under Nurse Ratched's dominance. The bait that McMurphy dangles, such a sense of life and excitement, is too sweet to pass up.

Clearly, in Nurse Ratched's scheme, such insubordination is a sickness even worse than catatonia. The uprising must be put down, McMurphy destroyed. So war breaks out, first tacit, then openly. "This cannot be permitted," says the nurse, and she will not relent, not until all sign of release and private joy has been stamped out and the asylum is restored to its natural state, as a land filled with zombies, institutional undeads.

Simplistic stuff, no doubt. Even within the novel's original context, back in the mid-Sixties, when the various new utopias of Haight-Ashbury, R.D. Laing and acid-love were still relatively new and unhackneyed, Kesey's polemics came too glib to swallow. The murderous Big Nurse, Freudian witch-mother, with her monstrous breasts, her sex withered and turned vicious by repression; the wondrous McMurphy, Oregon's own god Pan, so impossibly joyous and free; the crazies, miraculously transformed from drones into Dionysiac revelers, then back again: At every turn, the allegory was laid on with ten trowels.

These days, I would imagine, the gospel according to Kesey/McMurphy is even more discredited. We no longer believe, if we ever did, that all insanity is fiction, that mental disease will fall away at the first touch of empathy. Ten years on, the lines have grown blurred. McMurphy, free earth spirit, has become altogether too crude and pat a savior. Blood-deep terror and pain will not yield so simply, nor will authority always form such convenient ogres.

In Kesey's original sheer passion went a long way toward papering such cracks, so one was dragged in regardless. But the film has no such force. Essentially, Milos Forman is an observer, a man at one remove who watches and takes notes, describing without heat. So, inevitably, he has tried to make *Cuckoo's Nest* less extreme, to rub away its roughness and panic. Nurse Ratched, a werewolf in the novel, is here turned crisp and respectable. McMurphy himself, that brawling primitive, all sex and swagger, becomes Jack Nicholson, charming, wry. And the crazies, made cute, in the style of music-hall eccentrics, are mostly played for laughs, where formerly they were true lost souls.

The softening is everywhere. The asylum, which read like a Dickensian hell, is now bright and sparkling clean. A comic caretaker gets drunk on Jim Beam, the hospital director waggles his eyebrows. And so it goes, scene after scene. The convulsions are controlled, the horrors made half-whimsical. Gently but firmly, the screams are reduced to well-mannered moans.

In the last half hour, it's true, the film abruptly changes tone and all the submerged nightmares come boiling to the surface. But by then it's much too late. The sense of blandness has taken over completely and the traumas seem hopelessly forced.

In all of this, it must be said, the acting remains first-rate, so good that the surface almost convinces, largely blinds one to the marshmallow at the core. Jack Nicholson, though brilliant in technique, lacks the essential fury, the barbaric blaze, to be quite right as McMurphy. But Louise Fletcher as Nurse Ratched, starched to her bones, is perfect in frigid malevolence, and the ensemble playing is marvelous throughout. Will Sampson as Chief Bromden, the deaf-mute Indian, in particular, has so much presence, such absolute strength, that he fills the screen like a monolith, immovable, unreachable—a most rare gift.

Even so, good performances only mask the failures beneath. At root, the film is still a betrayal. Forman is a craftsmanlike director, and, at its own muted level, his film is skillful enough. But *Cuckoo's Nest* was never meant to be turned civilized, antiseptic. Take away its excesses, the terminal howl in its marrow, and you take away everything. Which is just what Forman has done: cleaned it up, degutted it, portioned its sprawling absurdities into neat, disinfected compartments; and, in the process, destroyed it, drained it of all its wild and irrational life.

The irony is inescapable. At the story's end, Nurse Ratched has McMurphy lobotomized. And in his own style, Forman does much the same to Kesey, leaving him, no longer roaring, with nothing more than a lolling grimace.

One question remains. Why must filmmakers deal in novels at all? In the case of something like *Jaws* or *The Love Machine*, enormous best sellers, the answer is obvious. But in nine cases out of ten, the dabbling has no root beyond laziness, the hopeless incapacity of movie men to have ideas of their own, and the transplant is doomed before it begins. Any good novel will have a

Nicholson and inmates: In their *Nest*, screams are reduced to well-mannered moans.

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density, a multiplicity of levels and flavors, that films can only hint at. But the written word has its own laws, its private potentials, and cannot be burgled at will, to be flung across the screen like so much flotsam, random cultural debris.

Admiration is no excuse here; neither is superficial fidelity to the source. However slavish the imitation, the essence escapes. Far better then, if the book is truly so fine, to let it lie in peace, undefiled.

These reactions are prompted not only by *Cuckoo's Nest* but by *The Story of O*, the latest confection from Just Jaeckin, who also made *Emmanuelle*.

In this case, the original, pseudonymously written by one Pauline Réage, is something distinctly special: the only piece of pornography I've read that actually creates its own interior world, instead of simply spooling out a list of organs and positions. It is a dream of sadomasochism, extended to its ultimate conclusions, in which the heroine is faced by only two choices. Either she must die or surrender all humanity and become no more than an instrument, a sexual receptacle, existing only for pain and subjugation.

As such, the book's atmosphere is distinctly chilly. At many points, in fact, it calls for gritted teeth and an ironclad stomach. Despite the physical unpleasantness, however, there is a compulsion in its vision, a sense of true obsession, that isn't easy to dismiss. Here, on the dark side of the moon, taste, intellect, manners lose all meaning. Love and hate are interchangeable; salvation can be gained only through degradation. So the only god is sensation, and the soul is freed through absolute abandonment, in the very act of its own destruction.

This is specialized material, and I find it hard to feel any real involvement. Still, at the very least, one must say that Pauline Réage pursued her work with the most prodigious devotion, a yearning so supreme as to be almost religious. Whereas Just Jaeckin, the incarnation of Pepsi, merely turns it into a fashion plate.

No need for detailed analyses. In its present guise, *O*'s mysterious, tortured journey becomes no more than stock soft porn. As in *Emmanuelle*, the bodies are elegant, the surroundings unfailingly chic, but the real action virtually nonexistent. Breasts and buttocks drift endlessly across the screen, cloaked in the discreet gauze of soft-focus filter. Whips crack, backs arch, voices cry out in frenzied angstasy, but to all appearances the three acts are unconnected, except by the editor's scissors. Corinne Clery, who plays O, looks very tasty indeed, in a somewhat deodorized, *Vogue*-ish manner, and there are lots of costumes from Cerruti, a few scattered pubes, much heavy breathing. But of the original dream in its starkness and cold logic, its twisted purity, no trace remains whatever.

Nor is the film even erotic. Invariably, Jaeckin has his ladies strip naked the instant they appear, thus robbing them of all mystique or possible surprise, and, during the sex acts themselves, his camera rarely ventures beyond O's contorted face. The repetitions are endless, the flights of imagination nil. "Shall I guide you to the very threshold of death?" cries a leering English milord at one point, snatching up his whips. At the screening I attended, however, the only response that he received was an elephantine snore, resounding in the silence, from the fat man on my left.

Books

Genius and gee whizzery

By Geoffrey Wolff

Letters Home *by Sylvia Plath.* Selected and edited with commentary by Aurelia Schober Plath. Harper & Row (502 pp., $12.50).

Warm smile . . . energetic worker . . . Bumble Boogie piano special . . . Clever with chalk and paints . . . Weekends at Williams . . . Those fully packed sandwiches . . . Future writer . . . Those rejection slips from Seventeen. . . .

The portrait of Sivvy, Syl, Sylvia Plath is sketched in her high school yearbook, *The Wellesleyan*, class of 1950. Her history after she left Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts, for Smith has been many times told in outline, but never in such detail as by these letters, almost 700 of them, mostly to her mother and ranging from her first days at college till a week before her suicide in London during the hard winter of 1963. They will disappoint many people's expectations. Feminists who have used her autobiographical novel, *The Bell Jar*, as a tract and her suicide as an enactment of protest against her martyrdom by males will not recognize their saint in these letters. Critics who have called her suicide the inevitable end of a life given over to the risks of art will be cast down by her refusal to satisfy such a mush-headed cliché. Readers of *The Bell Jar* who would single out for blame Sylvia Plath's mother, or dead father, or husband for her death will find here little to sustain them.

Her first suicide attempt, during the summer before her senior year at Smith, is exceedingly resistant to plausible explanation, even with the benefit of *The Bell Jar*. Say that her motives were pathological, and the proximate cause was a sense that her high place in the esteem of her classmates and teachers owed more to her manipulation of her career than to her merits as a scholar and writer. Her successful suicide attempt had more reasonable provocations: Her husband had recently left her for another woman, she had suffered serial illnesses during the coldest and cruelest London winter in more than a century, she had exhausted herself with the obsessive composition of the poems that later made up *Ariel* and *Winter Trees*, she was worried about money and the care of her sick children had drained her already overdrawn physical resources. These are not good reasons for self-slaughter, of course, but they provide a better reason than the impertinent and casual critical judgment that she killed herself to authenticate her poems about suicide.

She lived by paradox and manipulation, and in this was very much heir to an American literary tradition. From the time of Hawthorne and Melville, and later Emily Dickinson, American writers who have made their way into black and morbid territories have often veiled their intentions and practiced sinister dexterity, by which the right hand conceals the workings of the left, by which health and cheery acceptance conceal subversion and the exer-

cise of black magic. Read alone, Sylvia Plath's letters reveal a child of the Fifties, a paradigm, circle-pinned and tartan-skirted, loafered, breezy, offering a show of humility and casual good fellowship, grateful, a winner, quick to take the world at its face and herself at the world's measure of her, Betty Coed, as someone has written. Read with her poems and her novel, these letters reveal a shrewd intelligence, at home with artifice, a fanatical collector of prizes and awards and letters of recommendation who knew to the centimeter the value of her bona fides measured against the huge, devouring appetite of her imagination. They reveal divisions in her character and perversions of her seeming intentions, perversions that she nourished.

Photograph from Letters Home by Sylvia Plath 1975 by Aurelia Plath used by permission Harper & Row Publishers, Inc.

Plath with daughter: Her aim, to be a "triple-threat woman"—wife, writer, mother.

Not that her letters are merely documents in a confidence game, or that she set about tricking the world into taking her for something she despised. Rather, her poetry would not let her get away from what she truly was, just as Hawthorne's fictions protected him from what he seemed, a good citizen, and just as Emily Dickinson's poetry would not license her evident decorums. Sylvia Plath's case is complicated by the fact that poetry was only the first and most powerful of her many fixations. She wanted, with that eagerness to please so characteristic of her generation (and mine), to become all prized things: a "triple-threat woman," as she put it, "wife, writer and teacher (to be swapped later for motherhood, I hope)." She wanted to cook well, and did. She wanted to dance at Ivy League proms, and did. She wanted grants, and got them. She wanted friends of many kinds, and had them.

She had as a child a cunning sense of opportunity and realized what school could afford. When she was 8, on the day her father died, her mother suggested that she stay home from school: "I *want* to go to school," she replied. Before she entered Smith on a scholarship provided by the author of *Stella Dallas*, she developed a "strategy of popularity" that consisted in no small degree of hiding her braininess, putting forward the tall—what they then called willowy—belle who sits for the grotesque caricature in her high school yearbook.

Melancholy was not in fashion at Smith during Sylvia Plath's day, and she cultivated gee-whizzery in her letters home: "I like everything," she wrote, "I'M A SMITH GIRL NOW." Her affection for her circumstances was repaid with interest, in the manner of the times. Relentlessly, with the help of her elders, she built a juggernaut curriculum vitae, and wrote with accuracy that "the world is splitting open at my feet like a ripe, juicy watermelon." Soon she would try suicide, and, recollecting her character at the time, she wrote her mother from Cambridge University a kind of inversion of her lush conceit of before, placing herself where the watermelon had been, owning up to her "rigid, brittle, almost hysterical tensions which split me down the middle. . . ."

Her attitude toward her career as a writer (she very seldom mentions her writing except as a career) is calculating, and not a little cynical. Her letters are jammed with her plans and achievements in writing, but from Smith, even after she had had many things published, she seemed willing to settle for a place as "a good minor writer some day, and this would open such doors!" In her eagerness to conform to external expectations, she studied such magazines as *Seventeen* and *The Ladies' Home Journal* and *Mademoiselle* to get the right slant to suit them. Her ambition at Cambridge for her year as a teacher at Smith was "breaking into the women's slicks," and as late as 1960 she wrote her mother that "I am working very hard on something I never really attacked right—women's magazine stories."

She continued her ambition for the slicks into the last year of her life, at the same time abruptly changing the manner of her poetry to quick, brittle, edgy verses that are the only reasons these letters to her mother and brother are of interest to you and to me. However it might inflame the tempers of the feminists who have kidnapped Sylvia Plath from her authentic motives and achievements, her husband, Ted Hughes, whom she met at Cambridge, was a signal influence on her career, as on her imagination. His singlemindedness in pursuit of his poems screwed up the volume of her own will and ruthlessness. In harness together as poets, they lashed each other home, picked and even tore at each other's work, teased changes from it and supported it.

An odd eagerness to serve a putative superman led Sylvia Plath, somewhat like a martyr, to nurture Ted Hughes' career. She expressed pleasure, sincere, that his first book of poems was accepted before her first book of poems, and she wrote her mother that her "first concern [was] that Ted has peace and quiet." But she got her poems written, never mind, and she knew who and what she really was, just so: "I am a genius of a writer; I have it in me. I am writing the best poems of my life; they will make my name." The rest of that letter, written a few months before her suicide, is crazy and jumbled, now pleading, now scolding. The rest of the letter doesn't matter, except to show, as all these letters show, that poetry as powerful and well-made as Sylvia Plath's subsumes its author. That docility, careerism, a literary feminism compounded of Lawrence and Graves, that neurosis, grade-grubbing, confusion of wishes, that all aspects of character and circumstance bend before the force of such poetry, and cannot explain it. Just as no suicide can authenticate it. What Sylvia Plath was and wanted is pretty well made clear by these letters. Where her poetry came from, no one can say, or should care to.

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Joe Willie at a sorry pass

Final Tribute

By Mark Goodman

I felt maybe a little compassion for him at the end. He couldn't do anything right. I just hate to see such a great player know such a bad day. Much as I like to get those sacks . . . I must be getting soft.

Dwight White
Pittsburgh Steeler Defensive End

The sad, sacked quarterback under discussion was, of course, Joe Willie Namath, 32, the most celebrated American athlete of all time. More's the pity for that. The glum epic of Joe Namath and his glass knees has come to such a sorry pass that even before the spiritless New York Jet-Pittsburgh Steeler contest White's linemate, Ernie Holmes, announced that he and his partners in terror wouldn't hurt Joe, that they would "set him down nice and easy." Indeed, the Steeler defensive front four—who have bigger fish to fry on their way to a probable second Super Bowl appearance—barely pressured him: He was sacked only once, a marked improvement over the grisly thumping he has sustained all year. But Namath, standing on knees supported by a complication of girders that make him look like a large tinker toy, threw four interceptions—the sole statistic in which he leads the National Football League in 1975. Joe did manage a meaningless touchdown pass late in the fourth quarter to bring the score to a half-respectable 20-7, and when he left the field only the Jet bettors cheered; New York had been made an unheard-of 16-point underdog in its own Shea Stadium. Other fans, the ones who wistfully recalled the glittering days when their cocky champion picked apart the N.F.L.'s best defenses with a cavalry officer's panache and a lapidary's precision, averted their eyes, and took the long subway ride home.

It is only three years since I wrote a cover story for *Time* magazine likening Joe Namath to one of the most engaging rakehells in the chronicle of fiction, Tom Jones. The comparison is no longer apt. Namath now looks tired and drawn, even sullen; his remarks to the press are guarded, defensive. The old pizzazz is gone, and one can scarcely blame him. Because the myth of Joe Namath and the Jets has crumbled like the cartilage in his knees.

Living up to mythology can be an exhausting enterprise, as Namath has plainly discovered—off the field, at least. Last year Broadway Joe (a silly media misnomer to begin with—Namath was always one of those East Side night people who thought you needed a visa to travel west of Madison Avenue) moved out of his mirror-bedizened, llama rug-covered stew-festooned Manhattan apartment and into a two-story family house on a placid, tree-lined street in Garden City, Long

WIDE WORLD

Island. That is approximately 347,000 miles from Bachelor's III, the East Side saloon in which he owned part interest until N.F.L. Commissioner Pete Rozelle heard that unsavory folk hung out there. Namath's fame as a drinker and lover was naturally pumped up to prodigious disproportions: Had he drank and loved as much as reported, he would now reside either in Sister Kenny's or Forest Lawn. But the hullabaloo served him well commercially.

Namath's enduring reputation as the man to beat in the N.F.L. is another matter. It is true that Joe Namath in his prime could probably throw a football with more distance, speed and accuracy than any other quarterback in history, Sammy Baugh and Johnny Unitas notwithstanding. No connoisseur of the quarterback's art will ever forget the Baltimore Colt game of 1972, when Namath destroyed the supposedly invincible Colt zone defense with 15 of 28 completions for 496 yards and six touchdowns. Nor is there any denying that Namath changed the face of pro football. It was the $427,000 bonus paid him in 1965 by high-rolling Sonny Werblin that eventually convinced N.F.L. owners to merge with the upstart A.F.L. or go broke in the bidding wars. And it was the Jets' astonishing 16-7 upset of Baltimore in the 1969 Super Bowl—a victory Namath cheerfully predicted—that finally gave the A.F.L. parity with the established league.

Even then Joe's father begged him to give up football because of his knees, which had suffered four operations. But Namath was riding high behind the most fiercely protective offensive line in the game. There were touchdowns, girls, TV appearances, movie contracts; life was sweet.

But since that fabulous year Namath has spent more time in plaster and whirlpool than he has on the gridiron, and the Jets have yet to enjoy another successful season. The Jet management, in its arrogance—or indolence, or peculiar combination of both—bought the myth that on any given Sunday Joe Namath could singlehandedly defeat any team in the N.F.L., and on rare occasions, as against New England the week after the Pittsburgh embarrassment, he still can. The Jets pay him $450,000 a year to do just that, and it is arguable at this stage of Namath's career whether any other team will want to pick up that tab. Meanwhile, the rest of the Jet team has deteriorated around him until at last Joe is left to stand alone against monstrous opponents, an immobilized target belted in steel and armed with only a myth. "No one should feel sorry for me," he says, but enemy linemen do, and so do I. He is no longer Tom Jones; he has become El Cid.●

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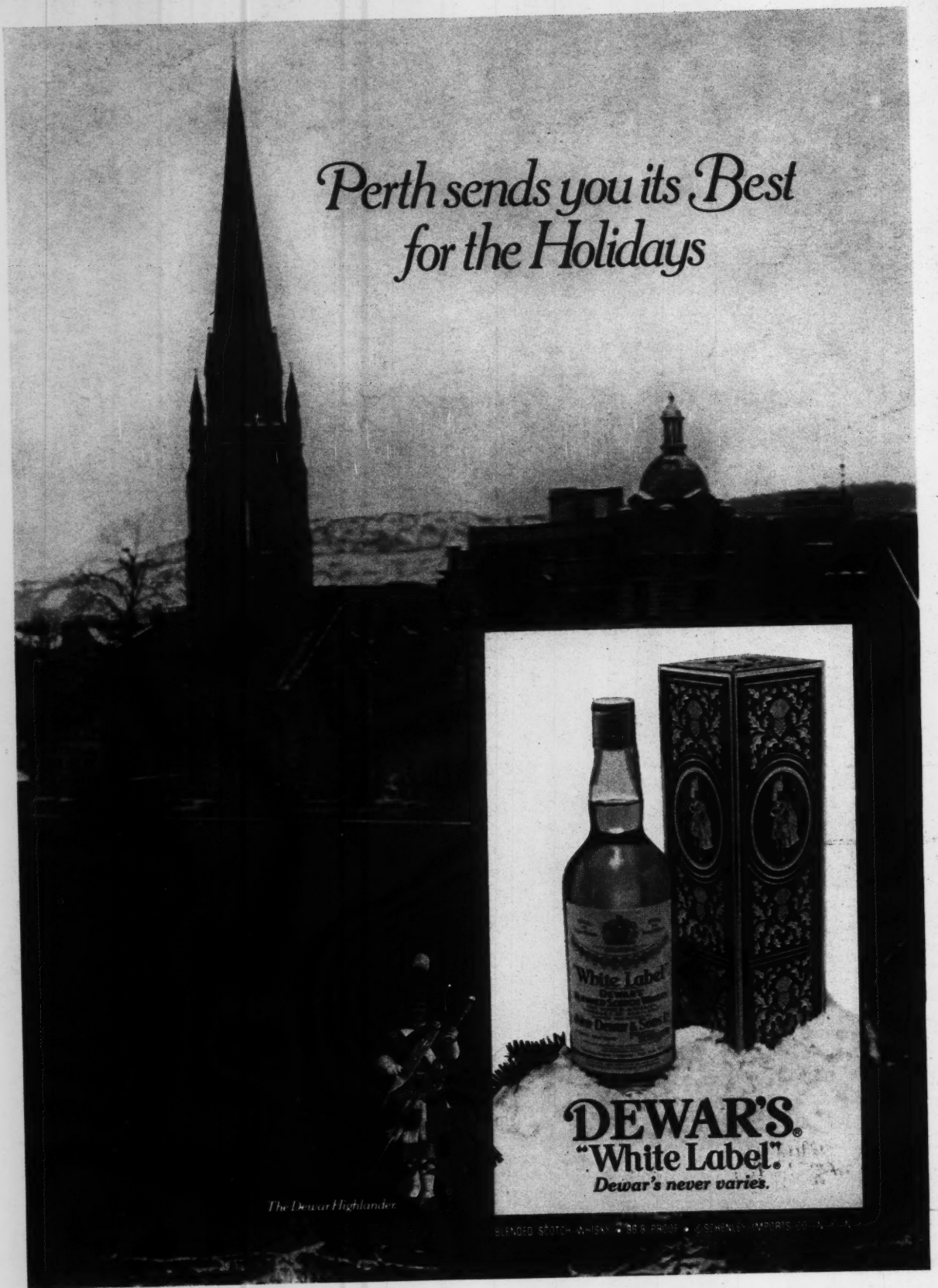
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